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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

J. G. Andison is Associate Professor of French in University College.

W. H. G. Armytage, a South African and a graduate of Cambridge, is on the staff of the University of Sheffield.

D. Bosley Brotman is a member of the English Department of Mount Holyoke College.

C. W. Dunn, Lecturer in English in University College, is preparing for publication a study of the Scottish Gaelic settlements in the Maritime Provinces.

Charles I. Glicksberg of Brooklyn College has contributed frequently to the Quarterly.

Karl F. Helleiner is Assistant Professor of Economics in the University.

Frank S. Hogg is Professor of Astronomy in the University and Director of the David Dunlap Observatory.

R. S. Knox is Professor of English in University College.

John Margeson has recently joined the English Department of Acadia University.

Gilbert Norwood, Professor of Classics and Director of Classical Studies in University College, was formerly a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

Malcolm Mackenzie Ross is Associate Professor of English in the University of Manitoba.

Carl F. Schreiber is Professor of German Literature and Curator of the William A. Speck Collection of Goetheana at Yale University.

Newman I. White, Professor of English at Duke University, is known to all students of nineteenth-century English literature as the author of the principal biography of Shelley.

Roy McKeen Wiles is Professor of English at McMaster University.

HIGHLAND SONG AND LOWLAND BALLAD

A STUDY IN CULTURAL PATTERNS

CHARLES W. DUNN

DURING the height of the debate in the eighteenth century concerning the genuineness of James Macpherson's translations from the Gaelic, Samuel Johnson decided to visit the homeland of Ossianic poetry. His repudiations of Macpherson's claims, which only increased in violence after this exploration of the Western Islands of Scotland in 1773, will not concern us here. In the course of his annihilation of the rash pretender, however, Johnson expressed two assumptions which deserve a fuller discussion than is usually afforded them. The first of these, to interpret his remarks in the widest sense, is that a culture can possess no literature without books. Finding in the Highlands and Islands neither printed books nor manuscripts of Gaelic poetry, but only oral traditions which he did not investigate circulating in a tongue which he did not understand, he wrote: "When a language begins to teem with books, it is tending to refinement. . . . But diction, merely vocal, is always in its childhood. . . . There may possibly be books without a polished language, but there can be no polished language without books." Extending this reasoning, he declared Gaelic to be "a rude speech of a barbarous people who had few thoughts to express, and were content, as they conceived grossly, to be grossly understood."

His second assumption is implied by a comment which he made after hearing sung a contemporary Gaelic song composed on the immigration from the Hebrides to America: "What sentiments would rise on such an occasion in the heart of one who had not been taught to lament by precedent, I should gladly have known." Clearly Johnson's reference to precedent indicates a supposition that the poetry of a non-literate culture can only be a spontaneous and unrehearsed outpouring, uninfluenced by any inherited canons of form, technique, or content.

Both opinions reflect not the eccentric dogmatism of one individual but rather the preconceptions widely shared by eighteenth-century intellectuals regarding ostensibly rudimentary cultures, and the only refutation they received in Johnson's lifetime took the direction either of patriotic indignation, as in Donald M'Nicol's *Remarks on Dr. Samuel Johnson's Journey to the Hebrides* (1779), or of personal abuse, as in two extant Gaelic satires, the one by William Ross, the other by an anonymous Highland gentleman. Avoiding both the reproof valiant and the reply churlish, the twentieth century can disagree with Dr. Johnson on quite different grounds. In the first place, the disciplines of folk-lore and of comparative literature have discovered that to evolve *a priori* generalizations concerning the nature of

the literature of any unfamiliar non-literate culture is a delusive undertaking. In the second place, Celtic scholars have recovered from sources unknown to Dr. Johnson samples of Gaelic poetry composed in Scotland as far back as the fourteenth century, and these do not entirely confirm his suppositions.

Let us, then, examine a few examples of this material, noting in particular the extent to which "polish" and "precedent" are present or lacking in the poetic efforts of the Highlanders. The selection of specimens can be conveniently limited to those dealing with what may be termed Scotland's favourite literary topic, warfare. And since our standards of judgment must be comparative rather than absolute, we may control our samples by asking in each case, what sort of poetic response did the event dealt with by the Highland poet evoke in the Lowlands? What, in terms of underlying precedents and of poetic achievement, are the similarities of the two responses, what the differences? The Scottish Gaelic examples will all be drawn from oral poetry, that is, from poetry which the poet composed with the expectation that it would survive, if at all, on the lips of reciters and not on the printed page. Such oral poetry is not, we may add, necessarily to be classified as folk-poetry; only poetry springing from the simplest and least instructed stratum of society should be so described.

I

The first period to which we may turn for illustration is that of the Scottish Wars of Independence, which culminate, at least from the point of view of later literary treatment if not of historical criticism, in the victory at Bannockburn in 1314. Gaelic poetry offers no contemporary comment on the event, but a poem survives from an earlier date which espouses the cause of an enemy of Robert Bruce's party. King Edward II of England, threatening Scotland, in a familiar phrase, with chains and slavery, was ready to seize hold of any weak link in Scotland's defences, and in 1310 finding a certain Gaelic chieftain, John MacSween, favourable to the English cause, he granted to him the whole land of Knapdale, which had once belonged to the MacSweens but had at this period come into the hands of Sir John Menteith, a Scottish loyalist. An otherwise unknown bard, Blind Arthur MacGurk, composed a poem inciting MacSween's forces to recapture Knapdale. This poem is of interest as being the earliest extant Gaelic poem of Scottish provenance; it is contained in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore,* a manuscript collection of Gaelic poetry compiled in the first half of the sixteenth century, which lay unnoticed until the eighteenth century when scepticism concerning James Macpherson's sources caused the members of the Highland Society of London to assemble all the Gaelic records they could discover. Of more immediate relevance to the present investigation is the fact that, although the record of the poem was not taken down from oral transmission until two hundred years after the date of composition,

it preserves unimpaired the strict metrical pattern and conventional style laid down by the Gaelic bardic schools which flourished from about the beginning of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth or later in both Scotland and Ireland, which during this classical period shared a common culture.

The excerpts quoted here are accompanied by translations (taken with occasional modifications from W. J. Watson's literal renderings[1]) which will suffice to give a general impression of the bardic style, but only the reading of a considerable number of examples could accustom the uninitiated to the closely knit texture of this genre, which Polonius might well have described as the "lyric allusive-exclamatory." The function normally performed by the verb in English poetry is quite commonly supplanted in bardic compositions by the mere juxtaposition of descriptive phrases, the relationship of which the listener must himself resolve. Thus the introductory stanza zestfully contemplates the recapturing of MacSween's hereditary possession

> Dal chabhlaigh ar Chaisteal Suibhne,
> suairc an eachtra i nInis Fail;
> marcaigh ag trachtadh na dtonna,
> glantair barca donna dhaibh.

Tryst of a fleet against Castle Sween, welcome is the adventure in Inis Fail [by metonomy, Ireland in general, where John MacSween is evidently foregathering]; horsemen travelling the billows, brown barks are being cleansed for them.

The poet then portrays the appearance of the fleet in a swift series of phrases suggestive of the shimmering effects achieved by the pointillist style of painting; he enumerates in turn the war-spears, polished targes, quilted hauberks, swords set with gold and ivory, couches decked for the ladies with speckled cushions of satin and sendal, and purple satin loops on each mast top. But he is a clan bard performing no mere artistic exercise; just when the seaworthiness of the expedition threatens to be smothered in a billow of satin, he reverts to the note of menace:

> 'N uair chualas urdhal an fheinnidh,
> gair na ndos 'ga gcur re ceird,
> na seoid oir o Eirinn aca
> don bhroin mheirsheing dhathta dheirg.

When was heard the warrior's muster, the trumpets' cry summoning them to ply their art, they had with them the golden heroes from Ireland, to form the slim-fingered, bright, ruddy-cheeked band.

He introduces his chieftain in eulogistic and metaphorical language characteristic of the bardic school:

[1] *Scottish Verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, ed. with translations by William J. Watson (Scottish Gaelic Texts, I) (Edinburgh, 1937), 6-13.

Cia so le seoltar an cabhlach
ar Chaislean Suibhne Sliabh Truim?
fear sreangach nach seachnann saighde,
leathcrann sgorach codad cruinn.

Who is this who steers the fleet towards the Castle of Sween of Sliabh Truim? It is a sinewy man who shuns not shafts, a hard, shapely, piercing lance.

Unfortunately for our present purpose, a literal translation does not bring out the most Gaelic characteristic of the poem, namely its metre. The principles of prosody underlying bardic verse, although ultimately descended from early medieval Latin forms, are unlike anything known to the development of English poetry, or indeed of any western European poetry with the partial exception of Icelandic skaldic verse. The poetic rhythm, in the first place, does not depend on a fixed alternation of either stress or duration. The four lines of the quatrain—the usual unit of bardic verse—are instead precisely measured out according to the number of syllables in each. Thus the quatrains of the metrical form employed in the *Tryst against Castle Sween* consist, alternately, of one line of eight syllables ending always with a dissyllable, and one of seven syllables ending always with a monosyllable. The last word of the second line rhymes with the last word of the fourth line according to the bardic definition of rhyme; that is, the stressed vowels are identical, and the consonants are all members of one only of the six phonetic classes into which bardic theory divides all consonants. So, in the first stanza quoted, *Fail* rhymes with *dhaibh,* and in the second *ceird* rhymes with *dheirg* (rhyme between consonant clusters is additionally restricted).

In addition to end-rhyme (between lines), moreover, internal rhyme (within lines) was also requisite. In the metrical pattern here used, two words in the third line must rhyme with two words in the fourth line. Thus, in the first quatrain, *marcaigh* rhymes with *glantair,* and *trachtadh* with *barca* (the latter group in a separately recognized category of imperfect rhyme). The final word of the third line must rhyme with the next-to-last word in the fourth line: *dtonna, donna.*

As if the poet's resources were not already strictly taxed, he was also expected to introduce alliteration within each line (in the fourth line, specifically between the last two words) and between the last word of the first line and the first word of the second line. So, in the first quatrain, *c(h)abhlaigh* alliterates with *C(h)aisteal, eachtra* with *Inis, trachtadh* with *(d)tonna, donna* with *d(h)aibh,* and *Suibhne* (in the first line) with *suairc* (in the second). Hence 75 per cent of the words in this quatrain are formally linked to the metrical pattern by more than the minimum requirements of syllabic balance.

The author of another poem of the bardic variety, reviewing the product of his ingenuity with an excusable self-satisfaction, commented in its concluding lines: "Two quarters [of a year] I took to the poem, knitting it from

the thread of pure speech."[2] That his work required half a year is readily understandable; and the metaphor of knitting is particularly revealing, coming as it does from the poet himself. It would not be sufficient in such a case to say, as is often said of a poem, that it was woven. No ready-made loom could pattern language thus. Each coloured thread must be individually chosen and worked in sedulously by hand. Hence perhaps the origin of the Gaelic proverb: "Is ionnan dan us ceard—Poetry and craft are one and the same." Even in the bardic period it probably was helpful to be born a poet, but mastery of the medium required an apprenticeship identical to that expected of any other craftsman.

Although such poetry was composed and transmitted orally, it clearly does not correspond very closely to Dr. Johnson's preconceptions regarding the nature of poetry based on "vocal diction"; moreover, occasional manuscript remains indicate that bardic poetry, though oral, was patterned on explicitly codified rules of prosody.[3] Such manuals in Ireland date from the earliest period of bardic poetry; and since an unpublished section of the Scottish Gaelic *Black Book of Clanranald,* which was compiled by the hereditary MacVuirich bard of Clanranald in the seventeenth century, contains a similar treatise,[4] one may assume that in Scotland also a conscious and well-defined sense of poetic theory dominated Gaelic barddom throughout the entire classical period.

When we turn by way of comparison from the Highlands to the Lowlands, we are struck by the complete gulf between the two cultures. The English-speaking section of Scotland produced no poetry during the Wars of Independence in any way equivalent to the *Tryst against Castle Sween.* The only surviving poetic treatment of the period, apart from a few brief fragments of political songs, is an epic of 14,000 lines, *The Bruce,* composed in 1375 by John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who was not born until two years after the battle of Bannockburn. His sources of inspiration are very different from those of the bardic schools. Although his subject-matter, much of which is derived from folk-lore, is as thoroughly native as the granite of Aberdeen, his style is hybrid. His metre is a hesitant octosyllabic couplet imitated from the French romancers of an earlier age; the pattern of his genre is in part the classical epic familiar to all the clerical students of his age, in part the medieval rhyming chronicle and romance cherished by the aristocracy. His dialect gives all appearances to the modern lay reader of being genuine "braid Scots," but the more critical eye of the philologist will discern in Barbour's vocabulary a curiously pedantic fondness for adopted Latin and French words which occasionally stand rather ill at ease amidst a humbler native entourage. One brief quotation will sug-

[2]Quoted without specification of source by W. J. Watson, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness,* XXIX (1914-19), 208-9.

[3]"Mittelirische Verslehren," ed. R. Thurneysen, in *Irische Texte,* ed. W. Stokes and E. Windisch, III, Pt. 1 (Leipzig, 1891), 1-132.

[4]Alexander Cameron, *Reliquiae Celticae,* II (Inverness, 1894), 145.

gest the flavour of Barbour's verse and at the same time provide a sample of his moderate narrative skill. When, in the climax of this epic, the poet has depicted the clash of the English and Scottish troops at Bannockburn, he writes:

> Than mycht men heir ensenzeis [war-cries] cry,
> And Scottis men cry hardely,
> "On thame! On thame! On thame! thai faill!"
> With that so hard thai can assaill,
> And slew all that thai mycht our-ta,
> And the Scottis archeris alsua
> Schot emang thame so sturdely,
> Ingrevand [troubling] thame so gretumly,
> That quhat for thame that with thame faucht,
> And swa gret rowtis [blows] to thame raucht [dealt],
> And presit thame full egirly,
> And quhat for arrowes that felly
> Mony gret voundis can thame ma,
> And slew fast of thair horss alsua,
> That thai vayndist [retreated] a litell we;
> Thai dred so gretly thane till de
> That thair covyne [plight] was war [worse] than eir.
> For thai that with thame fechtand weir
> Set hardyment, and strynth, and will,
> With hart and corage als that-till,
> And all thair mayne and all thar mycht,
> To put thame fouly to the flycht.[5]

Apart, however, from Barbour's stylistic eclecticism, the most striking conclusion to be drawn from a comparison between the works of the blind Gaelic bard and the learned archdeacon is that it is the former whose verse shows the greater polish.

II

The second event from which we may draw comparative samples is the battle of Harlaw, an encounter in 1411 near Aberdeen between Donald, Lord of the Isles, and the Earl of Mar, arising from a dispute over territory. The only Gaelic poem related to this period differs from the previous incitement to battle in that it is not composed in any orthodox bardic pattern, and, although according to tradition it was actually recited by one of the hereditary MacVuirich bards of Clanranald before the battle, it may date from a later period. But its style is so peculiarly Gaelic that it cannot be overlooked, and the date of composition is fortunately not relevant to our investigation.

The poem begins: "O offspring of Conn, be mindful of hardihood in the time of trial." There follow seventeen strophes unequal in length, each

[5]John Barbour, *The Bruce*, ed. W. W. Skeat (Scottish Text Society, Publications, XXXI - XXXIII) (Edinburgh and London, 1894), I, 330.

modifying the introductory exhortation by a series of adverbs. These adverbs alliterate throughout each of the strophes, which are arranged according to the order of the letters in the Gaelic alphabet. To render in English even a few of the lines in such a way that each Gaelic adverb is represented by an English word equivalent both in exact meaning and in alliteration would make impossible demands on the virtuosity of the translator, to say nothing of his patience; but one may reproduce the alliterative effect of the original, if not its literal meaning, fairly readily, although alliteration will always tend to be more prominent in Gaelic than in English since the accent falls invariably on the first syllable:

O offspring of Conn, be mindful of hardihood
in the time of trial,

angrily, awesomely,
arrogantly, aggressively,
alertly, awfully,
adeptly, adequately,
ardently, avidly, aptly, etc.;

bloodily, battlesomely,
bearlike, beastlike,
brusquely, bluntly, brutally, etc.

In the fullest version of the *Incitement* recorded from oral tradition[6] the number of adverbs in each strophe runs from twenty-two alliterations in "o" up to an extraordinary limit of eighty-four in "s." There are never more than two adverbs per line except in the final line of each strophe, where there may be three; otherwise no systematic metrical pattern is discernible. The number of syllables per line, so strictly regulated by bardic theory, is evidently a matter of indifference to the present poet.

After thus delivering his volley of adverbs in mid-sentence, as it were, the poet draws his lengthy period to a close. We may rejoin him in translation at the last letter of the Gaelic alphabet, "u":

Gu urlabhrach, urlamhach, urneartmhor,

Gu coisneadh na cathlarach
Ri bruidhne ur biuthaidh.

Ubiquitously, urgently, uglily, to overcome on the field of battle the acclaim of your foeman.

The poem then draws to a swift close, echoing in the last lines the words of the beginning, a structural device common to both classical and post-classical Gaelic poetry:

[6]Alexander and Donald Stewart, *Cochruinneacha Taoghta de Shaothair nam Bard Gaelach* (Edinburgh, 1804), 1-19.

O offspring of Conn of the Hundred Battles, now is the hour of your testing; O furious whelps, O sturdy bears, O full-spirited lions, O embattled leopards, among heroes valiant and valorous of the offspring of Conn of the Hundred Battles, O offspring of Conn, be mindful of hardihood in the time of trial.

Before passing any critical judgment on this singular *tour de force,* one should notice the peculiarly Gaelic features in its make-up. The animal personifications of bravery—the whelp, the bear, the lion, the leopard—are all familiar to the reader of Irish and Scottish bardic verse and must have seemed entirely natural to the intended audience even if they may somewhat startle the uninitiated modern reader. Conn of the Hundred Battles here alluded to is a hero of Old Irish legendary history who came to be considered an ancestor in the Macdonald genealogy; the substance of the legends surrounding his name, we may suppose, would be just as familiar to the hearers as his name. Finally, the florid use of alliteration is particularly Celtic. An extensive use of the device is requisite in the syllabic metres, although never, as here, to the exclusion of other more important features. Somewhat degenerate Irish prose dating from the fifteenth century or earlier and representing what is known as the "inflated style" may have suggested the bard's excessive use of alliteration and certainly offers a literary counterpart, if not a source. In the Middle Irish prose tale called *The Battle of Ventry,* for instance, we read that Goll, son of the king of Ulster, fought against Dolar Durba, the foreigner, in a combat described as "coinneart, calma, croidheamhail, feigh, fuileach, forbartach, etc.,"[7] to be freely rendered as "cruel, composed, courageous, ferocious, fell, frightening, etc.," and so on through twenty-seven adjectives arranged in alliterating groups of three. The device must have been common to Scottish Gaelic prose in this period too, but no literary remains survive. In the sixteenth century, alliteration retained such charm that Bishop Carswell in his Gaelic redaction of the *Book of Common Order* speaks not of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but of "an t-Athair tren trocaireach, agus am Mac maiseach mor-chumhachtach mirbhuileach, agus an Sbiorad neartmhor nosoirrdheirc niamhghlan naomh,"[8] freely to be rendered, "the fearless, friendly Father, and the sweet, superhuman, supernal Son, and the high, honoured, heaven-pure Holy Spirit." Indeed, long after the older syllabic style of Gaelic poetry had been replaced in Scotland by stressed rhythms, the device continued to flourish and gave rise to long descriptive passages consisting exclusively of alliterating epithets.

The literary qualities of the *Incitement of Harlaw* have been praised, but only by critics whose judgments are obviously more motivated by patriotism than by cautious discrimination. One can perhaps quite conscientiously agree with the author who suggested that the *Incitement* must

[7]*The Cath Finntraga or Battle of Ventry,* ed. with translation by Kuno Meyer (*Anecdota Oxoniensia,* Mediaeval and Modern Series, I, Pt. iv) (Oxford, 1885), 27.
[8]See W. J. Watson, *TGSI,* XXX (1919-22), 293.

have sounded impressive as it was poured out by an inspired bard on the brink of battle, but one can hardly refrain from repeating the words of the patient scribe who had recorded a very elaborate Irish syllabic poem more distinguished by its art than by its matter: "I do not think that this poem has much meaning, but I copied it out because it was so well and intricately expressed."

The Lowland Scottish counterpart of the Gaelic *Incitement* is a ballad, *The Battle of Harlaw,* which belongs to a genre of popular literature diffused over western Europe and yet totally alien to Irish or Scottish Gaelic tradition. An Irish Gaelic version of the popular English and Scottish ballad *Lord Randal* has been collected from oral tradition in Ireland, but such transference is extremely rare, and native Gaelic imitations of the ballad genre are completely unknown. Thus because of the vagaries of folk-culture, the Aberdonian composer could find his model for a popular and anonymous narrative song in a readily available international folk-lore form. *The Battle of Harlaw* is identical with any of the famous English and Scottish ballads both in rhyme scheme (end-rhyme between the second and the fourth line) and in the metre (four lines to a stanza, alternately four-stress and three-stress), a pattern perhaps developed from the popular medieval Latin verse-form, the *septenarius*. The Harlaw ballad differs from the largest group of ballads only in that it does not narrate an internationally known folk-lore incident but belongs rather to the local-historical type represented by such favourites as *Otterburn* and *Chevy Chase*. It reflects the milieu from which it originated most notably by its persistent disregard for the academic niceties of historical accuracy and detachment. According to the balladist, the outcome of battle was determined by a brave rally led by two brothers named Forbes. One of the brothers, during a lull in the fray, coolly sent for his coat of mail from the family estate at Drumminor, then killed the leader of the invaders, and the terrified Highlandmen ran away. Anonymous though the poet may be, one certainly suspects his close affinity with the Forbeses of Drumminor, for according to history no one of that family played any important part in the fight, nor were the Highlanders routed (the conflict was in fact a destructive dead-lock), and Macdonald of the Isles was certainly not killed, perhaps not even wounded.[9]

The Battle of Harlaw shares, however, another and a redeeming quality exhibited by much of the folk-poetry of its type. Through artless pathos it succeeds in conveying a profound truth, in this case the truth that neither side can ever really be said to win a war. The balladist's superficial local pride cannot conceal the inward horror he feels when he surveys the results of battle, battle over a cause, moreover, that must have seemed to him inexplicable:

[9]See William Mackay, "The Battle of Harlaw: Its True Place in History," *TGSI,* XXX (1919-22), 267-85.

On Monanday, at mornin',
The battle it began,
On Saturday, at gloamin',
Ye'd scarce kent wha had wan.

An' sic a weary buryin'
I'm sure ye never saw
As wis the Sunday after that,
On the muirs aneath Harlaw.

Gin ony body speer at you
For them ye took awa,
Ye may tell their wives and bairnies
They're sleepin' at Harlaw.[10]

That the balladist evokes a pathos from the situation by means of well-timed objectivity is neither an accidental nor an individual achievement. Pathos thus evoked is the predominant and universal characteristic of the best of the European ballads and may be reckoned an inherited device suggested to each new composer by earlier examples of the genre. Thus a local historical ballad composed in Denmark upon an event occurring two hundred years prior to Harlaw concludes on an identical note; only the specific imagery varies somewhat. After narrating the defeat of King Valdemar's forces at the battle of Lena in 1208, the Danish balladist sings:

The ladies stood in high-loft
Their lords return to see,
But every steed with gore was red
And empty each saddle-tree.[11]

III

In 1513 Scotland, both Highland and Lowland, suffered a most devastating defeat by the hands of the English at the battle of Flodden, long commemorated in song. The only surviving Gaelic treatment of the event is a bardic poem addressed to the Earl of Argyll in the form of an incitement to battle preserved in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*.[12] The unknown bard is steeped in bardic phraseology and historical lore. He describes first the victories gained by Gaelic legendary heroes:

I have heard that at one time Incin's Isle [by metonomy, Ireland] was under the rule of a Fomorian race: it roused the rage of the prince of Boromha,

until Lugh came across the sea with great warrior-bands of valiant troops; by him was slain Balar ua Neid—a deed for us to imitate.

[10]F. J. Child's number 163A, in *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ed. G. L. Kittredge and H. C. Sargent (Cambridge, Mass., 1904), 402.

[11]Free translation in *A Book of Danish Ballads*, selected by Axel Olrik, trans. E. M. Smith-Dampier (Princeton, 1939), 144.

[12]*Scottish Verse*, ed. Watson, 158-65.

The poet, assuming an understanding of the allusions among his audience, follows the traditional legends of the settlement of Ireland first by the Fomorians under Balar and then by the Tuatha De Danan. Lugh, the prince of Boromha, is here transformed, untraditionally but perhaps deliberately, from a leader of the Tuatha De Danan into a symbol of the Gaelic conqueror. The poet then refers to the contemporary crisis:

Who now, after that leader's example, will succour Gael from Saxons in our generation, just as Lugh aided his race against reproach?

The new leader proposed is, of course, the bard's patron, the Earl of Argyll, whose suitability for the position is supported not merely by praise of his valour but also by allusion to the prowess of his ancestors, Colin, Archibald, Duncan (described perhaps rather inappropriately here as "the friendly man who loved hounds"), another Colin, Archibald of Arran, and Colin of the Heads.

The programme advocated by the poet is uncompromisingly ferocious, in retrospect pathetically so when one recalls that Scotland in the ensuing battle lost King James IV and the majority of her nobility including Archibald, the Earl of Argyll, himself:

Archibald, you who refused no man, you are the Lugh of this latter time; O Earl of Argyll, be a champion triumphant.

Send your summons east and west for the Gaels from the fields of Leinster [by metonomy, all Ireland]; drive the Saxons westward over the high sea so that there may be no division in Alba [Scotland, both Highland and Lowland]....

Burn their boorish women-folk, burn their uncouth offspring, and burn their black houses, and free us from their revilings.

Then follows a peculiarly Gaelic stanza:

Send their ashes down the stream, after their bodies are burned; show no mercy to living Saxon, O vigorous and deadly salmon.

The unrelenting persecution of the very corpses of the enemy in a manner best suited to the disposal of witches is paralleled both in Gaelic poetry and, one suspects, perhaps in actual Scottish history also, but that the poet at such a grim moment should apostrophize his leader as a salmon must seem singularly inept, unless one realizes that the precedents of Irish and Scottish bardic poetry permitted the application of any of the conventional epithets to the subject of a panegyric, regardless of the context. So considered, the metaphor is not inappropriate, evoking in the mind of the sportsman an image of bravery, determination, and agility, and in the mind of the credulous a mystical aura of folk-beliefs concerning the magical fish.

It is doubtful whether any Lowland Scottish poem dealing with Flodden survives which is contemporary with the event, but no discussion of popular poetry should overlook Jane Elliot's (1727-1805) version of *Flowers of the Forest* composed in the eighteenth century. Only three lines survive of the source underlying the well-known lament, but these are possibly fragments of a traditional narrative ballad now lost. No greater tribute could be paid to the poetic value of the ballad in Lowland culture than to attribute to its inspiration a lyric reworking such as Jane Elliot's, but we must also acknowledge another moulding influence—the patriotic antiquarianism of eighteenth-century Scotland. An elegy for those who fell at Flodden not springing from such a peculiarly sympathetic historical imagination could hardly have evoked a pathos so immediate and so real.

The battle is not described; only its effects on the once happy pace of rural life are alluded to—the able-bodied men have been killed, only the aged survive, and the women are left to mourn.

I've heard them lilting, at the ewe milking,
Lasses a' lilting, before dawn of day;
But now they are moaning, on ilka green loaning [milking enclosure];
The flowers of the forest are a' wede [weeded] awae. . . .

In har'st, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering [joking];
Bandsters [sheaf-binders] are runkled [wrinkled], and lyart [graying] or gray;
At fair, or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching [coaxing];
The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae. . . .

We'll hear nae mair lilting, at the ewe milking;
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning, on ilka green loaning—
The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae.[18]

The formal conventions of bardic poetry do not achieve this kind of lyricism.

It is interesting to note, moreover, that Jane Elliot employs a much more sophisticated metrical and structural form than that of the balladist, one perhaps more in keeping with her status and certainly better suited to a lyrical than a narrative poem. At the same time, she happily retains the Scots dialect that was used by the balladists and is able to do so without the least affectation or condescension, for in her period "braid Scots" was the language of all Lowlanders, including even the most aristocratic members of Edinburgh society.

IV

When we turn to the Gaelic poetry composed after the end of the sixteenth century we find that the old bardic school of syllabic metres is losing

[18]Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, ed. T. F. Henderson (Edinburgh, London, New York, 1902), III, 404-5.

its domination. As in Ireland, so in Scotland, the measures directed by the central government against the powerful political force of the Gaelic bard must have begun to take effect. Records and traditions dating from about 1600 reveal the emergence into popularity of Gaelic poetry composed in metres based on a fixed number of stresses instead of a fixed number of syllables. The principal patterning device is a simple recurrence of assonance. Still limiting our selection to war poetry, we find plentiful examples of the new poetry in the work of John Macdonald of Lochaber, nicknamed John Lom (Bare John) and John Manndach (Stammering John). During his long life (*c.* 1615—*c.* 1709) he composed songs on the outstanding successes and reverses of the Royalist cause, to which he remained doggedly devoted.

Of these we may quote the one which celebrates the victory gained for Charles I in 1645 by the youthful James Graham, the first Marquis of Montrose (1612-50), over the Covenanters under Donald, the Marquis of Argyll, at Inverlochy.[14] It is representative of the poetry of the post-classical period in numerous respects, and all these respects are traditionally Gaelic. Oral tradition assigns an anecdote to the circumstance of its composition, to mention one common feature of the works of the later Gaelic poets. A Highland leader, Alexander Macdonald (Alasdair Mac Cholla) requested John Lom to march with him to the fight. The poet, however, was notoriously one who much preferred to recollect emotion in tranquillity, especially any emotion likely to arise from warfare. His engaging reply deserves to be recorded as a classic example of draft-evasion: "If I go with thee today and fall in battle, who will sing thy praises tomorrow? Go thou, Alasdair, and exert thyself as usual, and I shall sing thy feats. . . ."

Authentic though the anecdote be or false—it was only recorded some two hundred years after the event[15]—we find that the poet does in fact describe the battle as seen from an eminence, a very secure eminence, the choice of which he does not undertake to justify in his poem:

Early on a Sunday morning I climbed the slopes of Inverlochy Castle; I saw the forces advance in order, and the supremacy on the field was Clan Donald's.

Here the poet completely neglects the fact that the Stewarts and Robertsons of Athole, the Farquharsons, the Camerons, a force of Irish mercenaries, and some others assisted the Macdonalds to win the victory, an oversight which may be explained on two grounds. Perhaps, in the first place, John Lom reported events somewhat selectively in order to keep faith with the leader, Alexander Macdonald, whose prowess he had promised to

[14]William J. Watson, *Bardachd Ghaidhlig* (Inverness, 1918), 213-16.

[15]John MacKenzie, *Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach, or The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry* (Glasgow, 1849), 34 (cf. p. xxv), in a sketch written (according to the Rev. A. Maclean Sinclair, *Orain le Iain Lom Mac-Dhomhnaill* (Antigonish, 1895), 113) by Dr. Macintyre of Kilmonivaig.

celebrate. More probably, however, he here follows the long-established tendency of bardic poetry towards extreme partiality; and, to do him justice, it may be said he continues the tradition with creditable vigour.

His treatment of his enemies, the Campbells, illustrates another category of Gaelic poetry—the satire which approaches very close to explicit invective. Its literary quality, reminiscent of the Lowland Scottish "flyting" and even more especially of skaldic verse, is perhaps too international to be signalized as unique unless in its grim and macabre tone. Tradition claims that when the Campbells were defeated and were attempting to save their lives by crossing an unfamiliar ford in which they lost their footing, the poet, seeing their bonnets floating downstream, cried out at them, from his eminence: "A Dhuibhneacha, Dhuibhneacha, cuimhnichibh ur boineidean."[16] His jibe may be rendered freely, "O descendants of Dermot O'Downey, don't forget your bonnets"; but the English version fails to reproduce the satirical pungency of the solemn assonance and syllabic balance, of the mock-herioc use of the legendary cognomen for the Campbells, and of the incongruous nature of the message itself.

The poem's unsparing abuse of the enemy accords with this specimen of John Lom's satirical bent. Two stanzas may be cited, although the translation cannot be entirely self-explanatory:

When the great surge of hatred mounted at the moment of drawing the slender rapiers, the Campbells' nails lay on the ground after their sinews had been severed.

Many is the bare corpse, unclad, stretched out on Heather Hill, all the way from the field where the brave pressed forward, to the top of the slope of Rowan-Tree Field.

"The Campbells' nails lay on the ground," an expression strangely grotesque in English, is in Gaelic quite meaningful. When an unidentifiable body was washed up on the shores of the Hebrides, it was the nails which the discoverers would scrutinize; if these were well pared, they would quote a familiar Gaelic proverb, "The gentleman is known by his nails," and give the body a decent burial. These nails, the poet implies, are not the well-pared variety; rather they are, by an extension of meaning normal to the Gaelic word used here, cloven hooves. This cold-blooded damnation of one's enemies is standard satirical practice. Hence the poet can, unabashed and in the very next stanza, enumerate most gracefully by name the places where the fallen are resting. Satire one may find in Lowland poetry, but hardly satire manipulated thus.

Finally, one may remark without further quotation that John Lom perpetuates the Gaelic tradition of bardic eulogy in his song, post-classical

[16]MacKenzie, *Sar-Obair*, 41 n.

though it is; and his stanzas of this type, particularly those which he had promised beforehand to Alexander Macdonald, seem, in every respect except metre, identical with the older bardic style.

The Royalists in Lowland Scotland suffered perhaps even more excessively from the Covenanters than did their Highland allies, but they do not seem to have celebrated Inverlochy in verse. One may, in passing, however, remark on the vigorous satire aroused by the cruel invasion of Scotland led by the zealot commander David Lesley after Marston Moor and Philiphaugh (1645).[17] The song expresses the hatred of the Covenanters shared by John Lom; yet one verse will suffice to illustrate the difference of approach, technique, and tone:

> March! march! pinks of election,
> Why the de'il don't you march onward in order?
> March! march! dogs of redemption
> Ere the blue bonnets come over the Border.
> You shall preach,
> You shall pray,
> You shall teach
> Night and day,
> You shall prevail o'er the kirk gone a-whoring,
> Dance in blood to the knees,
> Blood of God's enemies!
> The daughters of Scotland shall sing you to snoring.

James Hogg calls *Lesley's March to Scotland* "the most perfect thing of the kind to be found in that or any other age."[18] Whether or not we agree with his opinion, we must remember, in our search for literary precedents, that the political song, like the ballad, has a long genealogy in English verse and that even before Bannockburn anonymous rhymsters were familiar with the sort of pattern which the Scottish Royalist of the seventeenth century is here reworking.

V

John Lom Macdonald also composed a song on the victory gained for James II at Killiecrankie in 1689 by John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, who himself fell in battle.[19] Like the other compositions of the period, the only extant versions of the song were recorded from oral tradition at a later period. An excellent illustration of the manner in which Highland culture was accustomed to the preservation of its oral literature is provided by the fact that the most complete surviving version, thirty-one stanzas in length, is that handed down by Alexander Ridge Macdonald, who

[17] James Hogg, *The Jacobite Relics of Scotland*, I (Edinburgh, 1819), 5-6.
[18] *Ibid.*, I, 163.
[19] Watson, *Bardachd*, 168-71.

was a first-generation Canadian living in a Highland community in Nova Scotia.[20]

Hogg's *Jacobite Relics* offers three Lowland counterparts on this subject,[21] one a Latin poem composed by an Aberdonian professor, using a rhyming *septenarius* in the tradition of the wandering scholars of the Middle Ages. The quotation of the opening lines will serve the purpose, if no other, of reminding us how varied can be the streams of literary influence:

> Grahamius notabilis coegerat Montanos,
> Qui clypeis et gladiis fugarunt Anglicanos;
> Fugerant Vallicolae atque Puritani,
> Cacavere Batavi et Cameroniani.

VI

The rising in favour of Bonny Prince Charlie in 1745 is much more amply represented by surviving Gaelic poems than any of the previous events mentioned; John Lorne Campbell in his anthology, *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five,* prints thirty-two out of some seventy which he has discovered in either books or manuscripts. While these may be of greater political interest than literary (they certainly disprove the standard historical estimate of the Jacobite cause such as P. Hume Brown's), they also illustrate the persistently Celtic features of Highland poetry. John Roy Stewart (1700-52), a descendant of the notorious Wolf of Badenoch, stands pre-eminent both in social and literary status among the many Gaels who attempted to find encouragement and consolation in poetry during those troubled days which culminated in the disaster of 1746. As commander of the Edinburgh regiment which fought in the front line at Culloden, he saw the Young Pretender's army destroyed, but a month later he attended a meeting of chieftains who were planning still another rising. For the next four months he was pursued across Scotland with a price on his head, until he escaped with his leader to France, where he enjoyed the doubtful consolation of receiving from James a baronetcy signalized as the "last patent of nobility granted by a Stewart claimant."[22]

Of his surviving poems, the only one which we shall discuss is *John Roy's Prayer,* composed during his flight from the Hanoverian victors.[23] The portrait with which it opens presents a dramatic situation in which the poet finds himself, a device rare in bardic poetry but already practised in the post-classical period by Mary Macleod in the seventeenth century. The fugitive has sprained his ankle and rests by a stream:

[20] Sinclair, *Orain le Iain Lom,* 103-5 (see 122, n. 29 and 123).
[21] Hogg, *Relics,* I, 28-33.
[22] *Highland Songs of the Forty-Five,* ed. with translations by John Lorne Campbell (Edinburgh, 1933), 167, n. 1.
[23] *Ibid.,* 186-91.

By a streamlet, worn and tired,
Th' poor Christian John Roy sits,
A warrior still lacking rest,
His ankle sprained, and wretched the time.[24]

The development of the poem is characteristically Gaelic:

I'll make the charm Peter made for Paul
When his foot was sprained leaping a bank,
Seven prayers in name of Priest and of Pope
As plaster to put round about.

He will cure his sprain by a charm which, although nominally Christian, harks back to the pagan culture of the early Celt. Then he turns from his personal danger to the situation of all his persecuted clansmen:

Every keen man who once served the King
Is now hunted over the moors.

Wretched carls without honour or worth,
But ready for aught for reward,
Take advantage of us everywhere—
O Christ, turn this wheel round about!

But John Roy still retains his Catholic faith and in conclusion proclaims the right of his cause with orthodox piety:

O God reared by Mary of grace,
Incline with thy favour thine ear,
As I worship with knee on the ground,
Accept from me a special prayer;

We are seeking only the right
That George and the Whigs took away;
With thy justice, give guidance and strength,
And keep us from the oppression of foes!

The most familiar Lowland song arising from Culloden is a lyric epitomizing the romantic attitude towards the '45 which dominated the subsequent literary interpretation of that pathetic venture:

Royal Charlie's now awa
Safely owre the friendly main;
Mony a heart will break in twa,
Should he ne'er come back again.
Will you no come back again?
Will you no come back again?
Better lo'ed you'll never be,
And will ye no come back again? . . .

[24]Campbell's translation.

Sweet the lav'rock's note and lang,
Lilting wildly up the glen,
And ae the o'erword o' the sang
Is "Will he no come back again?"

Will he no come back again?
Will he no come back again?
Better lo'ed he'll never be,
And will he no come back again?[25]

The identification of the song of the bird with the sorrow of the speaker is too characteristic of the literary convention of the contemporary English verse to require further comment.

Lest this survey leave too lasting an impression of melancholy we may, in conclusion, also quote from another Lowland song, quite different in tone, which expresses in the framework of a simple love lyric the heart-felt delight of a banished Jacobite at his home-coming. An allusion in the poem to Culloden dates the period of its composition, but the poet's attitude is universal; his sentiment would have been understood perfectly by that plain group of home-loving Athenian citizens who rejoice over the ending of hostilities in Aristophanes' *Peace:*

Lang hae we parted been, lassie, my dearie.
Now we are met again, lassie, lie near me,
Near me, near me, lassie lie near me;
Lang hast thou lain thy lane [alone], lassie, lie near me.

Frae dread Culloden's field, bloody and dreary,
Mourning my country's fate, lanely and weary,
Weary, weary, lanely and weary,
Become a sad banish'd wight, far frae my dearie. . . .

A' that I hae endur'd, lassie, my dearie,
Here in thine arms is cured, lassie, lie near me;
Near me, near me, lassie, lie near me;
Lang hast thou lain thy lane, lassie, lie near me.[26]

VII

What, now, are we to conclude from this sketchy sampling of the Gaelic and the Lowland poetry dealing with five centuries of war?

First, it must be clear that the nature of the literature peculiar to any ethnic group is determined by the group's total pattern of culture, to use a phrase popularized by Ruth Benedict, and not by the mere possession of, or lack of, a written literature. Thus, for instance, a polished style such as we find in the *Tryst against Castle Sween* reflects a society in which the autonomous chieftains respect poetry as a powerful political force and therefore

[25]Hogg, *Relics,* II (Edinburgh, 1821), 195-6.
[26]*Ibid.,* II, 211-12.

grant their bards the necessary leisure to evolve their elaborate stanzas. The simple style of *The Battle of Harlaw,* on the other hand, reflects a less leisured poet and a humble audience. Again, in bardic poetry the insistence on bravery, which may seem to the modern reader greatly exaggerated, probably springs from the bard's nervous realization that if his leader is *not* brave, the entire clan may be annihilated. The Lowland balladist's admiration of bravery, in contrast, stems from mere family loyalty and is quite subordinate in intensity to his horror that his kinsmen should be slaughtered in a territorial dispute which does not really concern them. Detailed analyses of the periods and localities in question could, presumably, carry this sort of interpretation much further, but the ultimate result of any such investigation is always likely to lead to the conclusion that patterns are unpredictable and ever-changing. Hence, to return to the problem posed at the outset, when Dr. Johnson uttered his *a priori* prediction as to the "polish" to be expected in the poetry of the Highlanders, he was wrong not merely through "ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance"; that is, he was not merely deceived by the intangible nature of oral literature; the assumptions of his age also precluded his visualizing the existence of ever-changing patterns of culture in the Celtic fringe of Europe. To "let observation with extensive view survey mankind from China to Peru" is still a laudable ambition, but the students of folk-lore and comparative literature would now demand the use of the intensive view also and, coupled with that, a sense of historical perspective.

Our second conclusion must be that it is not literate groups alone which possess an exclusive patent on literary precedents. Even Nature's children uttering their native woodnotes wild are exposed to the patterning influences of their inherited folk-culture, influences which vary just as extensively from culture to culture as do the various tenets endorsed by the subtle schools of literary theory. Bardic poetry, as we have seen, was dominated by elaborate conventions as to form and treatment; although these may have been recorded only sporadically in manuscript, they imposed on the poet unavoidable and infrangible requirements. Ballad poetry, on the other hand, constantly repeats inherited metrical, lyrical, and narrative devices, not perhaps from the balladist's conscious predilection for a particular school of literary theory but from the simpler human impulse to follow, in new circumstances, the old way approved by one's ancestors.

Finally, lest the present conclusions exaggerate the relativistic and deterministic emphasis of our discussion, we may add that the one element that Highland song and Lowland ballad always have in common is the creative act of the individual who, in the events and emotions of a particular moment in his people's experience, sees order and then crystallizes his perceptions in the patterns inherited and comprehended by the group. Such an individual, subject to pattern though he be, is always creating anew, and it is he whom all men honour by the title of "poet."

T. S. ELIOT: "THE MUSIC OF IDEAS"

D. Bosley Brotman

ANY line, if drawn without deviation, is simply carried farther away from its origin, and ultimately loses itself, or loses at least its connection with its beginning and source. If, however, this line is led back to the starting-point, as in the circle, it describes a satisfying and perfect figure; it perfects, by enclosing space. This principle is fundamental to any classic unity in art.

That the poetry of T. S. Eliot has tended to become more classical in form, that the poet has been evolving toward the kind of unity just described, can be seen from a chronological study of his work. That he has been aware of musical forms and the possible analogies between them and the forms of poetry is also apparent, in the poems themselves, and by the poet's own statement in various essays, from *Ezra Pound, His Metric and Poetry* (1917) to *The Music of Poetry* (1942). Thus it is not startling to find that in *Four Quartets* he has achieved a structure analogous to that of the classical sonata form at its apogee as exemplified in the last quartets of Beethoven. To what extent the musical structure has been consciously contrived by the poet is not known by this writer; but that lack of information does not detract from an understanding or enjoyment of the poetry. For the unity is an organic one: the form is implied in the kind of thing the poet is saying and the way in which it must be said.

The implication here is not that poetry and music are in any way the "same thing." The fogginess of some of Mallarmé's attempts to equate the two gives evidence (if it is needed) that they are not. And Eliot is well aware that words, besides expressing "visual beauty and beauty of sound . . . [must communicate] a grammatical statement."[1] But poetry can at least approach the condition of music, and in *Four Quartets* the poet has, through particular kinds of rhythm and structure, suggested meaningfully both definite ideas and emotions and the forms which they must take. These forms, suggested by the nature of the ideas presented, are implicit in the poetic structure, and in the kind of musical composition already suggested.

I realize that too close an analogy of this sort can become procrustean and unprofitable; for the ultimate value of this, as of any work of art, lies in the effect of the whole, to which the strategy of composition of any of its parts is subordinate. On this point Eliot has noted: "In a perfect sonnet, what you admire is not so much the author's skill in adapting himself to the pattern as the skill and power with which he makes the pattern comply with what he has to say. Without this fitness, which is contingent upon period as

[1] *Ezra Pound, His Metric and Poetry* (New York, 1917), 14.

well as individual genius, the rest is at best virtuosity."[2] Also, formal relationships are by no means an end in themselves: they can be completely meaningless. On the other hand amorphousness in a certain context can be meaningful, can be a form.

Eliot has characterized the aims of a poet (or of a period in poetry) as including first of all the search for a "modern colloquial idiom." When this idiom has been stabilized, however, "a period of musical elaboration can follow," a period in which the poet is concerned with further polishing the actual form, and refining "visual beauty and beauty of sound" within his idiom. He continues:

I think that a poet may gain much from the study of music: how much technical knowledge of musical form is desirable I do not know, for I have not that technical knowledge myself. But I believe that the properties in which music concerns the poet most nearly, are the sense of rhythm and the sense of structure. I think that it might be possible for a poet to work too closely to musical analogies: the result might be an effect of artificiality; but I know that a poem, or a passage of a poem may tend to realize itself first as a particular rhythm before it reaches expression in words, and that this rhythm may bring to birth the idea and the image; and I do not believe that this is an experience peculiar to myself. The use of recurrent themes is as natural to poetry as to music. There are possibilities for verse which bear some analogy to the development of a theme by different groups of instruments; there are possibilities of transitions in a poem comparable to the different movements of a symphony or a quartet; there are possibilities of contrapuntal arrangement of subject matter.

In his early poetry Eliot carried on the struggle for a "modern colloquial idiom," a struggle, the resolution of which at that time was probably most complete in *The Waste Land*. But even through this period there is a musical richness in the rhythms and repetitions of the poetry, and a consciousness of relationships between two art forms sometimes even in titles, as "Preludes" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." In some poems there is even a suggestion of the hypnotic quality of pure sound apart from meaning, as in lines from "Marina":

> What seas what shores what grey rocks and what islands
> What water lapping the bow. . . .

But through all this early poetry there is little stress laid on the perfecting of a technical form: the initial search is for an idiom.

By the time of *Four Quartets*, however, the idiom has been stabilized, and the poet's concern is primarily for elaboration and refinement of that idiom. He is also engaging in a much larger projected work than any previous, so that there is additional concern for a theme which will satisfy the demands of a complex abstract form.[3] The themes of the four poems in this

[2] *The Music of Poetry* (Glasgow, 1942). All following quotations in prose by Eliot are to be found in this essay, unless otherwise noted.

[3] The converse of this suggestion is of course also true. A poet may begin with a definite theme, or with the idea of working within a given large form.

cycle are essentially one, in so far as the parts are related to and clarify each other, and become finally different aspects of the same point of view. The spiritual condition of man, the aspects and the paradoxes of time within eternity, and man's concern with them—this is the material of all the poems. In each one the point of view is elaborated, a dialectic further developed. The material of each of the poems works to construct a unified whole; but each poem is itself complete, and describes its own circle.

It is apparent upon casual reading that each of these four poems has in a large sense the basic structure of a string quartet. What is further interesting, however, is that under analysis this poetry can be seen to follow in rather surprisingly close fashion the principles of construction of its musical counterpart, and the principle of *return* in musical composition. The general statement and the pattern of development in each of these poems are essentially the same, although each is individual in its particular kind of statement and development. The variations and deviations, however, are not different from nor greater than those in any two musical quartets. Within the larger orthodox framework numerous variations are possible. What is described below as a basic musical structure in *East Coker* does not hold up explicitly for the other three poems in the cycle any more than the technical analysis of any one sonata, symphony, or quartet can be carried over completely to another. What does carry over, however, is the large framework within which the individual possibilities operate, and certain basic abstract principles of construction peculiar to the form as a whole.

The three-part song form, which in its third part provides for and executes a return to the beginning (*a-b-a*) is the basic design of the sonata form, which is utilized in the opening passages of *East Coker*. In an allegro mood the principal theme, time, is stated:

> In my beginning is my end. In succession
> Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended. . . .

The mood is one of change, flux, impermanence. There is living and dying in quick succession. Time passes, and fires become ashes, pass into the earth,

> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces. . . .

The subordinate theme, eternity, follows. Here is an opposition to the principal theme. The mood is slower, in a different key. Time has stopped, and there is silence. Description replaces the positive statement of the first section:

> . . . the deep lane insists on the direction
> Into the village, in the electric heat
> Hypnotised. In a warm haze the sultry light
> Is absorbed, not refracted, by grey stone.
> The dahlias sleep in the empty silence.
> Wait for the early owl.

These two, time and eternity, are the themes for the poem. Following the idea of musical themes, they become independent "sentences," distinct from each other in style and character. They are broad in concept and significant enough in idea to offer potentialities for the wide and varied development demanded in this kind of form. Time for Eliot is impermanent. There is continuous flux, mobility. Against this is eternity, containing a paradox of movement through time, yet itself motionless and still.

Following the ternary design, the material comprising *b* of the *a-b-a* structure (lines 24-47) approximates the length of the initial exposition (1-23). Each of the themes is developed alternately, in a sort of poetic scherzo of alternating metres. In time,

> On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
> Of the weak pipe and the little drum
> And see them dancing around the bonfire. . . .

Then a transition appears from time to eternity, for the mirth of the earth feet dancing is the

> Mirth of those long since under earth
> Nourishing the corn.

And time in eternity is merely repetition of event:

> Feet rising and falling.
> Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

Here a rhetorical pause occurs,[4] linking the material to a recapitulation which, though merely started, is sufficient.

> Dawn points, and another day
> Prepares for heat and silence. Out at sea the dawn wind
> Wrinkles and slides. I am here
> Or there, or elsewhere. In my beginning.

The *da capo* is obvious. The beginning theme has merely to be stated for identification. We are at the start of the poem again; a circle is completed.

The first movement of the poem is analogous to the sonata form except for one noticeable stop (in the form of paragraphing) between the statement of the two themes at the beginning of the poem. Such a stop is not ordinarily found in this form of musical composition. Transitional devices, such as modulating passages, are customary; but complete stops, unless demanded by the material, defeat the essential idea of movement through a complete exposition—which continuous flow is fundamental to a highly developed sonata form. However, this break may be necessary: by their natures the formal patterns of one art form cannot be carried over completely into another, and in the final analysis of any work the material must

[4]The rhetorical pause is a musical, as well as literary, device. Cf. Haydn, Symphony 101, bar 218, where the development ends on the dominant of the following recapitulation.

be seen to dictate the particular form and its variations. In a musical work the composer would have the advantage of definite changes of key as vehicles for presenting contrasting material. In poetry such breaks in mood and tonality may be effected by period and paragraph.

The second movement of *East Coker* follows the rondo form (couplet, refrain, couplet). The themes are the same, but are developed this time on a more cosmic scale; the material is more deeply analysed. The passage of time is visualized in the contrast of young and old:

> What is the late November doing
> With the disturbance of the spring
> And creatures of the summer heat,
> And snowdrops writhing under feet. . . .

The two-part song form pattern (*a-b*) of this first couplet of the movement splits in the middle with a perfect cadence. No transitional material is used: from the earth—its roses and its early snows—we are transported suddenly to the heavens:

> Thunder rolled by the rolling stars
> Simulates triumphal cars
> Deployed in constellated wars
> Scorpion fights against the Sun
> Until the Sun and Moon go down. . . .

War in time continues—change and impermanence, death and rebirth:

> Comets weep and Leonids fly
> Hunt the heavens and the plains
> Whirled in a vortex that shall bring
> The world to that destructive fire
> Which burns before the ice-cap reigns.

Science has disclosed these things: time, the earth, the sun are impermanent. As for man, he must realize his insignificance before the terrible facts of science. One is reminded of Mr. Bloom's astronomical cerebrations: "gasballs spinning about, crossing each other, passing. . . . Same old dingdong always. Gas, then solid, then world, then cold. . . ." Beginning to end to beginning continues without cessation.

The refrain, eternity, is next developed in a subdued, contrasting tone:

> That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory:
> A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion. . . .

The abrupt change of tone is astonishing, but a relief to the ear and the senses following as it does the excitement and violence in the cosmic view. Eliot's shift to the prosaic would seem to be an intentional one: the intensity

of the celestial display can be sustained for just so long, after which a passage of less intensity is necessary as contrast.[5]

The poem continues to elaborate the refrain. Explanations in time will not suffice: one is left still

with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings. The poetry does not matter.

The "elders" had killed religion, put man rather than God in the centre of things. From their point of view man in time would achieve a long-hoped-for serenity, and the wisdom of age. But what value could this have in an eternity?

Had they deceived us
Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?
The serenity only a deliberate hebetude,
The wisdom only the knowledge of dead secrets. . . .

Following the *a-b-a* return to the beginning, the second couplet begins, using the material of the first couplet (time), but with new exposition, here a discussion of the Bergsonian concept:

There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience.
The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,
For the pattern is new in every moment
And every moment is a new and shocking
Valuation of all we have been.

And as in the constellated wars in which heat and cold oppose until both are extinguished, as "Leonids fly" wildly and blindly "whirled in a vortex," so man is in darkness, knowing not where he is going:

. . . in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold.
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment.

In the face of this, only one condition can sustain man through time:

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.

[5]Whether this kind of prosaic transition may have been intentional here can be considered in the light of a general statement by Eliot that "in a poem of any length, there must be transitions between passages of greater and less intensity, to give rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical structure of the whole; and the passages of less intensity will be, in relation to the level on which the total poem operates, prosaic. . . ."

The second movement concludes with a coda utilizing material from the first couplet in a repeated-cadence formula:

> The houses are all gone under the sea.
>
> The dancers are all gone under the hill.

A coda at this point was optional. If used, it might have included material from either of the themes or from transitional passages, or have been completely new material. In music it is very often presented in a repeated-cadence formula (dominant-tonic), as suggested in the lines above.

The third movement is a theme with variations. Here is a continuation of the subordinate theme of the first movement, an expansion of the initial suggestion of eternity, hypnotized in stillness, the "wait for the early owl" which is the beginning of darkness. In this movement we have come full upon it:

> O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant. . . .

The theme of darkness and eternity is developed with its variations. Here the imaginative composer presents his material in every conceivable aspect. The first variation is a series of phrases enumerating those who will go into the darkness. In the final reckoning,

> . . . we all go with them, into the silent funeral,
> Nobody's funeral, for there is no one to bury.

The second variation, beginning

> I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
> Which shall be the darkness of God,

follows the circle of three-part song form (*a-b-a*). The theme is stated: man must submit to what is taking place in time, in eternity—without fear, without love, without hope—only aware of what is taking place. This is followed by a contrasting description of emotion and darkness:

> . . . an underground train, in the tube, stops too long between stations
> And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence
> And you see behind every face the mental emptiness deepen
> Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about. . . .

In return, the reiteration—the expansion of the idea of danger in emotion:

> I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
> For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
> For love would be love of the wrong thing. . . .

There is feeling, and thought, in eternity, but we cannot yet comprehend it. Perhaps, as in Rilke's *Prodigal Son,* God is not yet willing to have us perceive, and love him. Added paradox is established: that of movement in

the stillness of eternity. God's dark, if we let it come upon us, will become the light:

So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

A third variation appears, a series of musical phrases, enumerations in time—light, laughter and ecstasy, but

pointing to the agony
Of death and birth.

Variation four is a series of complete musical periods (that is, sentences) utilizing further the material of paradox. Each period is an entity in itself, but as each new one is stated the momentum is increased, the intensity deepened:

In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own
And where you are is where you are not.

The fourth movement is a pure transitional device, a relief from the heavy-falling cadences and abstractions, a lead-up to the summation of the fifth movement. This fourth part is a complete form in itself, but in a sense not a real movement at all. It is a bridgelike form, in mood and length a transition between two larger, more completely elaborated movements. For a comparative structure in musical composition one may cite Beethoven's Quartet No. 15 in A minor, opus 132, fourth movement, the forty-six measures of which serve as a transition to the following movement.

In this movement the poet is reworking the same material, elaborating further his paradoxes, this time in a series of five regular double-periods in 2/4 time (iambic tetrameter). A four-measure phrase is added to each double-period, which contains a deceptive cadence leading into the extra phrase, i.e.:

Double period
- *Period* — The wounded surgeon plies the steel / That questions the distempered part;
- *Period* — Beneath the bleeding hands we feel / The sharp compassion of the healer*'s art* (*deceptive cadence*)
- *Extension* — Resolving the enigma of the fever chart.

The double-period in music finds a common poetic analogy in almost any stanza of four fairly long lines, that being a design in which one can expect unity of meaning, uniformity of metric structure, the progressive evolution of one continuous thought, corroboration of rhyme, and at the same time, some degree and kind of contrast. All of these materials are utilized in this structure, and the total effect is one of tautness and tenseness, a temporary

holding back of the kind of elaboration and intensity pursued in the third section.

The last movement is the summation of all the suggestions touched on in the preceding movements. The same thematic material is used, but now the instruments are muted, the mood is less immediately intense. The emotion has been clarified and refined, and the summation is presented quietly, for "what there is . . . has . . . been. . . ." There is nothing new; the vast circle continues.

This section can be interpreted as the real fourth movement of the quartet, the final summation and recapitulation of themes. Musical feeling has been clearly achieved here in the intrinsic mood of summation and realization, the "mood of resurrection" common to the last movement of many symphonies. The poet has realized fully his own state in time. After the five uniform stanzas of the preceding movement, there is a break, and the last section begins:

> So here I am, in the middle way, . . .
> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
> Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
> For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
> One is no longer disposed to say it.

And, in spite of knowledge, the danger of becoming ensnared in false feeling is eternally imminent:

> And so each venture
> Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
> With shabby equipment always deteriorating
> In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
> Undisciplined squads of emotion.

Time passes fleetingly, bringing with it change. One begins in childhood, living "the intense moment," feeling each event isolated and significant. As maturity is approached, one realizes progressively the strangeness of the world, the complex pattern of existence. There are echoes from the first movement:

> There is a time for the evening under starlight
> A time for the evening under lamplight. . . .

But time continues, and man must continue with it, accepting his role in humility. For we do not know, there is

> perhaps neither gain nor loss.
> For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

But,

> We must be still and still moving
> Into another intensity

For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation. . . .

The quartet ends with the ultimate paradox, the mirror-inversion of the principal statement at the opening of the first movement:

In my end is my beginning.

The circle has been completed, the themes resolved satisfactorily within a classical framework.

It is interesting to see here that the poet has been able to carry through this form without suggesting a poetic or musical pastiche, or in any other way producing an effect of artificiality. This effect of freshness of technique is largely the result of a particular combination of contemporary and traditional material, in structure, idiom, diction, and allusion. Part of that intention can be evinced from Eliot's previously discussed statement of the need, and the search for, a "proper modern colloquial idiom." In calling for that idiom, Eliot is of course only repeating what any age of revolution in poetry may announce, what Wordsworth called for in his prefaces. "And he was right," Eliot observes, "but the same revolution had been carried out a century before by Oldham, Waller, Denham, and Dryden; and the same revolution was due again something over a century later." But Eliot has been concerned on the whole not merely with the contemporary idiom, nor even with the immediate form the use of that idiom is to take, but with the way the complete work will fit into a continuing tradition in poetry, will make use of a living past as well as a living present, and of "tradition" as well as the "individual talent." That he is one of the most conscious artists of our time is a conclusion that can be fairly drawn. Certainly his stated theories of poetic content and structure are well illustrated in his own poetry. His critical theories, too, are of the same cloth.

In a certain sense this illustrates nothing more than consistency within the poet-critic. And this kind of critic may be, as Eliot remarks, not so much a judge as an advocate. But the final relevance of both the consciousness and the various kinds of consistency in the artist lies in the degree to which he has been able to effect a unity of ideas and form through his own art; and in the over-all oneness of vision (or purpose) with which he has evolved from his earliest to his latest work. In the light of this, it is not surprising that Eliot, in his long double concern for both the traditional and the modern, should have arrived in *Four Quartets* at a point where he has been able successfully to combine both elements; he has achieved to a very great extent a modern range within classical limitations.

FRANZ KAFKA: A CRITICAL PROBLEM

JOHN MARGESON

THE influence of Franz Kafka has been widely proclaimed in recent years, both in Europe and in America. But it has become increasingly clear that he is a victim of cults. Little groups of intellectuals who have followed the leaders, from the commissar to the yogi end of the spectrum, speak of Kafka as the true prophet for the modern world, the one who has revealed the mysteries of existence and who has pictured crude materialism for the nightmare it is. In fact, the reading of Kafka is often a prerequisite for admission to these groups. On the other hand, there is no doubt at all that his novels have stimulated important work by other writers. The allegorical novel is becoming an increasingly popular mode of expression, and writers like Rex Warner owe something to Kafka's books.

If he has stimulated certain writers to a form of expression new to this generation, Kafka has done little to help along the state of criticism. Since his novels and stories have become known, a spate of articles and books has been written about them from political, psychological, theological, sociological, economic, and even literary points of view, and often various attitudes are tangled together in a single article. The problem of criticism now is to decide how much emphasis to put on biographical and other elements in his works in the attempt to present those works as symbolic structures with some form and completeness of their own.

His novels and short stories obviously represent his way of looking at life, the pattern which he saw running through life. Biographical materials tell us how he developed a mind that was to look upon the phenomena of life in this way. Again, the study of his aphorisms, his letters, and his diary reveals to us something of his fundamental religious beliefs and indicates the origin of certain theological elements in his novels. But the components do not explain the whole. His novels and short stories form a canon of work which represents his vision of life, the whole based upon his own experience, but modified and unified by his imagination.

The psychologists, theologians, and others may object at this point that Kafka wrote not to present an imaginative ordering of life, but because of some inner necessity. To the psychologist, all Kafka's writings represent an attempted escape from his father. To the sociologist, Kafka wrote in order to portray the agonizingly clumsy and unjust bureaucracy of the Austrian Empire with which he became acquainted. He had to describe it intensely in order to release his hatred for it. But to the theologian, Kafka wrote in order to obey a religious impulse: "Writing is a form of prayer," is a remark attributed to him.[1] From this point of view, Kafka wrote with the same

[1]Max Brod, *Franz Kafka, a Biography* (London, 1947), 75.

motive as Bunyan's, in order to communicate his own religious experience to others and influence them by it. If these claims are justified, then Kafka's novels must be considered mainly as psychological material or perhaps as a record of religious experience.

In order to answer these claims, we must look briefly at Kafka's life and experience, and then examine his chief works. The psycho-analysts are no doubt right when they emphasize the importance of Kafka's family life in relation to his later work. His early life was marked by hatred for the domination which his father exercised over him, and at the same time by admiration for his father's qualities of vigour and strength.[2] Because he was unable at any time to measure up to his father's expectations or win his father's approval for any action of his own, he had a continual sense of failure and guilt, and the intensity with which he experienced this feeling is expressed in *The Metamorphosis* and *The Trial*. Kafka spent a large portion of his life attempting to escape from his father's influence and at the same time attempting to win his father's approval. He did not possess enough of the boldness and vigour of the Kafka family to strike out on his own, not at first in any case, although he achieved some independence later in life.

The second great influence in Kafka's life was the official position he chose for his career, a position in the Workers' Accident Insurance Institute for the kingdom of Bohemia. He made this choice mainly because it offered him some free time which he could devote to his writing. However, he found that there was set up a perpetual strain between the routine of his office work and his creative work after hours; he would merely get started on something that interested him and he would be forced to stop. As a result, he was seldom able to finish anything to his satisfaction, and many works were left incomplete. Another result of his choice was that he came into close contact with Austrian bureaucracy and saw something of its inner workings. The bureaucracy of the Insurance Institute reappears in the vast irresponsible hierarchies of *The Trial* and *The Castle,* incomprehensible in their scope, baffling to the individual, and yet theoretically just.

The problem of marriage was one which exercised Kafka's mind for many years. He first considered marriage when he met a young woman from Berlin in 1912. Besides being attracted to her, he wanted very much to live a normal life, to found a family, to be a part of a community. There were strong impulses within him, however, opposed to the idea; he worried particularly whether he would be able to carry on his creative work once he had married.[3] Although his final illness relieved him of the necessity of making a decision, he felt once more a sense of failure because he had been unable to become a part of family and community life.

These then are some of the experiences which form the basic material for his writings. But this material was moulded by his mind and his imagi-

[2] *Ibid.*, 20-1. [3] *Ibid.*, 112.

nation, and we must look at the shape of that mind. Kafka reacted at an early age against the superficial nature of his father's religious observance, and for a time apparently had little to do with the worship of his own people. Later in his life, however, he became interested in a group of Polish-Jewish actors who used to play in a small Prague restaurant; and he studied Hebrew literature and some of the ancient religious books. Of the Christian theologians, he was attracted most of all by Kierkegaard whom he read first in an anthology, *The Book of the Judge,* and then in *Fear and Trembling.* His main interest seems to have been in Kierkegaard's notion of the incommensurability of the divine and the human orders, a notion which he found also in the Book of Job and which he was to emphasize in his own writings.

He made use of the basic conceptions of the fall of man and of man's sinful state upon this earth.[4] Man's life in the world is a continual judgment as if a court were sitting "in perpetual session."[5] But Kafka did not pretend to be a guide for the way back to Paradise; he was as blind as other men and knew no way. The Christian revelation is not rejected in his aphorisms—it is just not considered. The nature of God and the way to God remain mysteries which he cannot fathom.

From materials such as these, one can begin to form certain patterns which are useful in the understanding of Kafka's works. But the question remains, are his writings merely a record of his personal and religious experiences, or have they a wholeness of their own which transcends the component parts? An attempt will be made to show that Kafka wrote not autobiography, but novels, allegorical novels with several different levels of meaning. In each of his novels, he has treated a personal problem, a social problem, and a religious problem, not separately, but together by means of the same symbols. The symbols are capable of expansion from one level to another, and it is this which gives them their force.

Amerika is the first of the three novels, and in many respects it differs remarkably from the others. Though it has some of the qualities of a dream, yet it is a more hopeful novel than Kafka's other nightmares because the hero, Karl Rossman, is so thoroughly an optimist. It is more episodic than the later novels: attention is not concentrated in the same way upon a single task which the hero must perform.

Because he has been seduced by a maidservant, Karl Rossman is sent off to America by his grieving parents. There he is welcomed by a wealthy uncle for a time, but suddenly he is cast off for a trifling fault. He works as an elevator boy in an enormous modern hotel, but is discharged for a misjudgment which is only a result of his attempt to be conscientious to the utmost. As a fugitive from the police he lives a somewhat battered life for a time with two rogues who have caused him most of his trouble and an

[4]Franz Kafka, *The Great Wall of China* (New York, 1946), 298.
[5]*Ibid.*, 287.

enormous fat singer who is the mistress of one of them. There is a break in the story; then the final chapter shows him out of work and signing on as a member of the great "Nature Theatre of Oklahoma."

Karl is the innocent person to whom unpleasant and troublesome things happen. He is also conscientious to a degree beyond his years. Whenever he is faced with a decision, he considers all the possible results of his action and endeavours to be scrupulously fair to himself and to others. Yet in spite of these virtues, perhaps because of them, he is continually in trouble. Others living carelessly and foolishly seem to get along with reasonable success. Karl's over-scrupulousness does not help him in any degree. Yet his search is the search for a good life, part of which is work to which he can devote all his energy and innate ability. He wants to make his way in the world and gain the approval of those above him. Though at first his attempt to impress his uncle favourably by his willingness to work and learn is successful, a misunderstanding destroys all his effort and he is thrown adrift. As an employee of a great hotel, he tries to live up to the expectations of the manageress by doing more than his share of the work. But a combination of awkward circumstances tells against him in his encounter with the drunken Irishman, Robinson. Possibly his one mistake in this incident was his attempt to be just towards an old acquaintance who did not deserve such treatment.

Amerika belongs to the class of quest novels, though not in the same degree as *The Trial* and *The Castle* where the quest becomes overpowering in its intensity. The quest is Karl's search for a new life and work which will allow him to reveal his tremendous eagerness to do well. America as a country represents opportunity to the European mind: the circumstances which stifle effort in the old continent are supposed to be absent in the new. Kafka, however, shows the same difficulties as had always faced the European turning up in America; they are symbolized by vast organizations (like that owned by Karl's uncle, and the hotel) with their own enormous hierarchies. The individual cannot hope to struggle against the hierarchy even if he is in the right, because the officials may also be in the right from a different point of view.

Karl's last move, his decision to join the Nature Theatre of Oklahoma, is a move still further west, and symbolically is like his first move across the Atlantic, from restriction towards greater freedom. Though the book is unfinished, and Karl never reaches Oklahoma, we can gain some idea of the character of the theatre from the recruiting station which Karl encounters. The flamboyancy of the recruiting methods, the use of girls dressed as angels and set on high pedestals with trumpets to blow, seem to be Kafka's exaggeration of an aspect of American life which he found in American periodicals. But the recruiting station does indicate that the Nature Theatre is also a huge organization with its own hierarchy. The difference between this organization and others described in the book is that this one is beneficent. "Everyone is welcome," its posters declare, and Karl's experience confirms

the message. He is hired as a technician, is promised that he will some day fulfil his old dream and become an engineer, and is fed a delicious dinner of turkey and good wine. The book ends as he travels by train with the other new employees through wild mountains towards Oklahoma.

On the personal level, we may see in the book Kafka's hatred of frustrating bureaucracies, his own desire to escape from the cramped circumstances of his life, and his early optimism that if a man is conscientious enough, he will be able sooner or later to find the sort of life he wants to live with its accompaniments of trust, love, and sympathy. On the social level, the book is a criticism of the massive organizations which modern life has made necessary, organizations which have little regard for the motives and spirit of the individual since they have an independent power of their own and needs which must be recognized. In the Nature Theatre, Kafka seems to recognize the possibility of a beneficent organization, but its implications are not worked out since the book was left unfinished. There are suggestions in the novel of an ethical problem: how can one live a life on earth in accordance with certain laws of honesty and justice when such a life does not bring any apparent reward? The lazy and dishonest lift-boys in the hotel keep their jobs, while Karl, the one striving his utmost to do well, is caught in a moment of neglect.

Kafka was quite right in comparing his novel with those of Dickens[6]: it possesses the same somewhat episodic structure as it follows a hero through strangely various experiences and through different classes of society. Kafka displays something like Dickens' gift of characterization in his descriptions of Mr. Pollunder and Mr. Green, Robinson the Irishman, Delamarche the Frenchman, and Brunelda the singer. There is little of Dickens' atmosphere of realism in *Amerika,* however, though there may be something of Dickens' exaggeration in the direction of the grotesque. Kafka placed his story in a setting he knew only from travel books, magazines, and newspapers, so that everywhere there are touches of the fantastic. America is as much a dream-world as the city of *The Trial* or the village of *The Castle*. Nevertheless, as a setting, it is closer to the real world than the settings of the two later novels. In spite of certain allegorical elements in the work, the surface story is more important than the stories of the later novels because it is more independent and has a power and movement of its own.

No one could read *The Trial,* however, accepting only the surface meaning. Even if a reader does not discover other satisfactory meanings, he will be bothered by the book, and at least search for other significance. Joseph K is arrested one morning, but he is unable to discover the nature of the charge against him, the authority of the court that has ordered his arrest, or anything else about the matter. The court, he discovers, is held in a musty tenement room and is crowded with strange, poorly-dressed people. The examining magistrate himself is a "fat little wheezing man" seated before

[6]Brod, *Kafka,* 109.

a table on a little platform, and the throng in the room nearly knocks over Joseph K, table, magistrate, and all. Though still unable to discover what the charge against him is, Joseph K feels more and more strongly the power of the court and the presence of its influence everywhere. Every tenement seems to possess court offices in its attic where accused men wait wearily and hopelessly for news of progress in their cases. The accused still possess an ostensible freedom, but they are expected to report for interrogation; as they become more and more wrapped up in their cases, they drop their other activities and concern themselves with nothing else.

In one nightmarish scene after another, Joseph K attempts to get help in his trial. He hires an advocate well acquainted with the court and its methods; he makes love to the advocate's nurse for any help she may be to him; he visits an artist who paints portraits of the lesser judges. He discovers that the court is an enormous hierarchy, apparently irresponsible and corrupt in its outermost extensions, though ultimately responsible and correct. Defence before the law is only tolerated, not expected, and the defence never knows completely the charges it must meet. He finds out from the painter that definite acquittal is a legendary matter only: no one has actually heard of such an acquittal. Ostensible acquittal is a possibility: it involves merely an affidavit signed by a number of judges stating that the accused is innocent. However, further arrest after such an acquittal is probable. The third alternative is indefinite postponement, that is, preventing the case from getting further than its first stages.

Joseph K is not attracted by ostensible acquittal or by postponement; being precise and definite himself, he prefers a clear-cut decision. He dispenses with the advocate's services when the advocate appears to be getting nowhere, in spite of severe warnings, and he refuses to admit any guilt to a priest who has summoned him to the cathedral. Still in his mind are several devices by which he hopes to influence the court, but his hopelessness and great weariness are emphasized. In the final scene, he waits for his executioners. They arrive, two comic little men in black suits, seize him, and take him to a deserted quarry. Just before they turn the knife in his heart, Joseph K sees a sympathetic figure in the lighted window of a house, but he dies "like a dog."

The surface story of *The Trial* is not so independent as that of *Amerika*. The long harangues of the advocate, Tintorelli the artist, and others tend to destroy the dramatic qualities of the narrative and turn it all into endless argument. Nevertheless the atmosphere of the whole is powerfully sustained. The strangeness of proceedings becomes obsessive because of the minute accuracy of realistic detail: rough wooden planking, old beds, narrow stairs leading to obscure attics, foul air heavy with the moisture of drying laundry, skylights that cannot be opened, and excessive heat. In spite of the argumentative passages, therefore, the surface story has a dramatic impact of its own. Its strangeness, however, forces the reader into looking for some meaning beneath the surface.

A political allegory is not hard to find. The court which Joseph K encounters is similar enough to the law courts of the old régime, and to the other bureaucratic departments of government. There is effective description and criticism here of the way in which an individual in an encounter with a bureaucracy is refused a fair hearing by the outermost extensions of the enormous hierarchy. Kafka's year of unpaid service in the law courts, and his work in the Insurance Institute provided him with many details for the background of *The Trial*.

In his aphorisms, as in his diaries, Kafka was more inclined to talk in religious terms than in political or social terms: he spoke of sin and guilt rather than of housing and bureaucracy. And so, although the material of this book is a description of slum life in a large European city and of corrupt legal proceedings in a decaying empire, nevertheless, the story itself seems to be concerned with something else, a religious problem rather than a social problem. Joseph K's struggle to comprehend the nature of the charge against him and the nature of the whole hierarchy of the court is an allegory of the struggle of the modern man who is almost willing to admit his own sinfulness but cannot see any justice in the universe which could fairly judge him. In this sense, the allegory is fairly consistent. Joseph K, the hero, discovers that the judgment upon him is based upon irresponsibility and corruption, and is associated with dirt, squalor, and vengeance inflicted upon those who are too weak to bear the burden. The various advocates he encounters are the priests who claim to have a special way of access to the mysteries of the divine courts. The omnipresence of law court offices and the numerous adherents of the courts represent in some degree the large numbers of churches and their members in all sections of society. The appearance of a priest as a priest is somewhat puzzling if the advocates already represent the priesthood; but the allegory cannot be tied down too definitely, with exact correspondences between levels of meaning. It must be remembered also that Kafka never considered the book to be finished or in a fit state for publication.

It is said that Kafka deliberately pictured divine justice in squalid terms in order to emphasize the incommensurability of the divine and the human orders, in somewhat the same way as the writer of the Book of Job and Kierkegaard had done. No doubt this statement has some truth in it: Kafka did not question directly the power and authority of the supreme judge or of the hierarchy as a whole. His problem was one of comprehension rather than of rebellion. Nevertheless, the obsessive horror of the picture is such that one has the impression that Kafka enjoyed adding still another unpleasant possibility to the dialectic process. The agony of his search is sometimes transmuted to plain enmity.

The setting of *Amerika* is a far-away land of fantasy and imagination, of *The Trial* a central European city, and of *The Castle* a remote country village with its *Schloss* on the hill above. The hero of *The Castle* has not even

the first name possessed by the hero of *The Trial:* he is merely called K. K arrives in the village one evening and asks for a bed in the inn. He announces that he is the new land-surveyor hired by the Count. Later in the night he is awakened by a young man who tells him that he cannot stay in the village even for one night without special permission from the castle. A telephone call to the castle brings first a denial that any land-surveyor has been hired, then a correction stating that one is expected after all; and K is allowed to stay the night at the inn. In the morning he attempts to walk through the deep snow towards the castle, but although the road seems generally to lead in that direction, it turns away now and then so that it is always approximately as far from the castle. Exhausted by the effort of plowing through the snow, K seeks to enter a cottage. He is tolerated in the steaming interior for a time, but then is thrust out again into the snow. In the gathering darkness, a little man takes him back to the inn with his horse and sledge.

The attempt K has made to get in touch with the castle is typical of the attempts he makes in the rest of the book. He wishes to do two things which are intimately connected: first, to get in touch with the castle and establish his own position, and secondly, to find a place for himself in the village while he is carrying out the first task. If he can live in the village and be accepted by the people, he will have established some sort of connection with the castle, even though a very tenuous one.

His successes are very slight: he receives a letter from the chief of Department X directing him to carry out the instructions of the superintendent of the village. He is allowed by a bar-girl called Frieda to peek through a keyhole at a high castle official by the name of Klamm. And he entices Frieda away from Klamm, whose mistress she had been, to live with him. But his failures drift over his successes like the snow in which the village is buried. He can find no land surveying to do, and is forced to act as a school janitor. His effort to establish some kind of a home with Frieda meets with complete frustration. And he discovers that the castle has no real knowledge of his presence or of his activity. Every attempt to reach the castle authorities meets with failure, and at last K is exhausted by the struggle. The story has no ending but we are told by Max Brod that Kafka indicated an ending on one occasion: that as K lay dying, word was to come from the castle stating that he was to be allowed to live and work in the village, not through right, but because of certain circumstances.[7]

K is first of all a stranger seeking to enter a small self-satisfying community, and his story is a story of loneliness. His attempts to find love, work, and sympathy in the village, deep in its winter snow and darkness, are frustrated time after time with frightening persistence. On the personal level, the story is a picture of Kafka's own life, the record of his failure to find his way into any sort of community where he felt he might belong.

[7]Franz Kafka, *The Castle* (New York, 1945), 329-30.

K is also the Jew, tolerated by the village community, but never accepted fully into its life. His long attempt to enter the community of the village is like the struggle of the Jew for integration into the life of western Europe. Perhaps the story of Barnabas and his family is even more directly a parable of the fate of the Jews. Because Amalia would not agree to the obscene suggestion of Sortini, an important and busy castle official, the family was ostracized by the village for all future time and reduced to extreme poverty. Although there was no proof that a command from the castle had caused this ostracism, the likelihood was there. The refusal of the Jews to accept the birth of Jesus as the coming of the Messiah and the consequent suffering of the Jews form a possible extension of the meaning.

However, a wider extension is possible, which makes K out to be neither Jew nor Gentile but the man seeking the favour of God and a life on this earth in accordance with His will. But the will of God is portrayed in such a strange way that the incommensurability of the divine and the human orders is again powerfully emphasized. The approval of the castle is granted apparently at random: though its decisions are always correct, the process by which the decisions are arrived at is so remote from village experience that it can only be guessed at. The officials of the castle are unapproachable for the most part, and they are organized into an enormous hierarchy which appears inefficient and irresponsible because of its mere size. The Count at the head of the whole organization is only a legend. On this level of meaning, the Sortini episode is Kafka's version of the Abraham story. The command received by Amalia by all ethical considerations was wrong; however, it was a command from the castle and should have been obeyed for that reason. Village morality has only a relative validity and must be disregarded when commands from the castle intervene.

But an emphatic presentation of the incommensurability of the divine and the human orders does not seem a complete description of this novel. There are two other features of it which must be considered, and which may be of greater importance than the Kierkegaardian doctrine. In the first place, although a remnant of faith is apparent, the remnant is insignificant in the whole structure of malicious indifference which Kafka builds up as a representation of God's attitude towards men. There may be theoretical justice at the basis of the castle hierarchy, but the justice seems to be based upon either indifference or hatred rather than upon love. The divine order in Kafka's view, then, is not only incomprehensible to the individual but it is also destructive in its activity.

The other idea which stands out clearly in the novel is the weariness and hopelessness which overcome anyone searching for some contact with the divine order. K meets only continual frustration as he attempts to reach the castle, and yet he continues in his struggle. His perseverance eventually seems to be the only value in the book. But at the end, the message which comes from the castle has no relation to his long effort which in itself has

failed completely. Not only does Kafka picture the divine order as malicious, but he represents man's search for the divine as a hopeless one.

The mood of hopelessness is carried on in his later short stories, "Investigations of a Dog" and "The Burrow." "The Great Wall of China" is, by contrast, a happy, almost a serene story. In it, the enormous distance between the small village and the great emperor in Peking represents the gulf between the human and the divine orders; but this time, the distance seems hardly to matter, and the life of the villagers is perhaps happier as a result of it. "Investigations of a Dog," however, pictures the gulf between the two orders as that between the human order and the animal, a gulf which no amount of questioning on the part of the animal can bridge, particularly when the whole human order is invisible to the animal. The investigating dog has seen certain dogs dancing as to a wonderful kind of music and has heard a hunting dog sing, but he himself has never been able to attain their glory. He has conducted experiments, also, to try to determine from where and by what means food comes to the dogs. Now, in his old age, he realizes that he has only attained isolation from his fellows and no satisfaction for all his questioning. But no such mood of resignation is apparent in "The Burrow." Here the individual is a burrowing animal who devises an incredibly complicated network of underground passages by which he hopes to protect his treasures and provide easy means of escape. The digging of defences, however, will not keep out the enemy, and terror is the atmosphere of the story as the prisoner in his own burrow hears the unknown enemy digging a way through.

It is clear, then, that Kafka's writings may be discussed on at least three levels, the autobiographical, the social, and the religious. The fiction or the story of each book provides the working material for all three levels. On the personal level, his books present a record of his own experience, his unhappy and unsuccessful search for understanding and faith. They present also his experience as a Jew in an alien community, and his loneliness as an abnormally self-conscious individual in an unsympathetic society. On the social level, his works portray the struggle of the small man against the enormous power of bureaucracies, representing government, law enforcement, and the organizations of commerce. On this level again, we see the experience of the Jewish people, portrayed, for example, in the story of Barnabas. Finally, on the religious level, his novels express the disillusion and the religious pessimism of the age. The waste land of an age of broken faiths is as evident in Kafka's writings as in those of other poets and novelists. And in this waste land, the agonizing struggle of the soul to reach the refreshing waters of faith takes place.

On none of the levels is there suggested any solution for the problems presented. On the personal level, a solution would have been possible only if Kafka had been treating past experiences which he had already become reconciled to and had transcended. Obviously, although writing itself was

a form of relief for him, he found no solution for his difficulties even in the process of writing. On the social level, he described slum conditions of life and utter poverty, and the effect of enormous hierarchies of officials upon an individual caught in the official net; but nowhere is there any hint of the necessity for social action. His books have no propaganda value: they are not sociological novels demanding action of some sort. On the religious level, he presented a picture of man's struggle for understanding and faith. But once again, there is no suggestion anywhere that he knew of any solution for the religious problems of mankind. Kafka was no Bunyan, depicting the pilgrim on life's way in order to draw all men towards religious conversion. It may be possible to argue, in fact, that he was a propagandist for irreligion, so bleak and cold are his pictures and so demonic the forms within them. But such malice against the divine order is a matter of emotion rather than a form of solution to the problem.

Kafka was not, therefore, a social propagandist or a religious propagandist. The primary function of his novels and short stories is aesthetic. They are a representation of an age and of a generation as perceived by an artist who could not see the whole of that age but whose special vision could reveal part of it. Kafka has added several of the deepest and most sombre colours to the painting which the artists of this age have been composing.

PASCAL AND THE GREAT EXPERIMENT

J. G. Andison

IN France, the year 1948 has already marked the hundredth anniversary of the Revolution of February, and in November the University of Bordeaux will be celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois*. This year is also the anniversary of another event, intrinsically much less important than the other two, but related to a discussion which was decisive in discrediting the qualitative physics of Aristotle and the School, and in establishing the experimental method of mechanistic physics—the Great Experiment of the Puy-de-Dôme.

I

It was on September 19, 1648, that Florin Périer, upon instructions from Pascal, successfully performed the experiment of Torricelli's barometric tube at the top of the Puy-de-Dôme (4,800 feet), and also at a point called Lafon de l'Arbre which is a little more than a third of the way up the mountain. At the summit the column of mercury measured 23 1/6 *pouces* (6 *pouces* = 6 1/2 inches approximately) in height; at Lafon, it measured exactly 25 *pouces,* in comparison with the 26 7/24 *pouces* which it measured in the garden of the Minim fathers at Clermont. According to Pascal, this established the fact that atmospheric pressure was the cause of the suspension of the mercury in the tube, and the phenomenon a particular case of the general principle of the equilibrium of liquids.

Pascal thereupon composed his *Récit de la Grande Expérience,* a certain number of copies of which were printed without licence some time between October and December. The *Récit* is a veritable shout of triumph. "Dear reader," writes Pascal, "the universal consent of men and the throng of philosophers agree in the affirmation of this principle, that Nature would rather allow its own destruction than the smallest vacuum. Certain superior minds have adopted a more moderate principle: for although believing that Nature abhors a vacuum, they have nevertheless concluded that this abhorrence has limits and can be overcome by force; but no one has as yet advanced this third principle: that Nature has no horror of the vacuum, that she makes no effort to avoid it, and in fact admits it without difficulty and without resistance." On the one hand, therefore, we have the universal ignorance of universal mankind, and on the other hand, Pascal alone. . . .

And yet we should in all fairness not overlook the fact that four years earlier, on June 11, 1644, someone else had more modestly affirmed: "Many people have said it is impossible to produce a vacuum, others that this is possible, but not without resistance on the part of Nature and without effort. As far as I am aware, no one has ever said that a vacuum can be produced

without difficulty and without any resistance on Nature's part." These lines were written by Evangelista Torricelli to his pupil Michelangelo Ricci in one of the letters in which he describes and interprets his experiment of the column of mercury. Extracts of these letters were sent by Ricci to Father Mersenne in Paris, and later Mersenne brought back from Rome complete copies which he gave to Roberval, professor of mathematics in the Collège de France and friend and collaborator of Pascal.

The strange similarity of these two texts would in itself be enough to dilute our enthusiasm for Pascal's triumph. But already on December 13, 1647, Descartes, in a letter to Mersenne in which he announces having received Pascal's preliminary outline (the *Expériences nouvelles touchant le vide*), makes the following statement: "I had suggested to M. Pascal that he investigate whether the quicksilver rose as high on the top of a mountain as it does at the foot; I do not know whether he has done so." Later, upon hearing through Huygens of Périer's successful experiment of September 19 (for Pascal had neglected to send him a copy of the *Récit*), he wrote to Carcavi for particulars, adding: "I should rightfully expect this from him [Pascal] rather than from you, because it was I who suggested two years ago that he perform this experiment." And again, in writing to thank Carcavi for his summary of Périer's report, he added: "I had some interest in hearing about it, as it was I who asked him, two years ago, to do this . . . otherwise it would not have occured to him as he was of the opposite opinion."

On September 24, Carcavi wrote to Descartes stating that he had asked Pascal to send him an account of the experiment. Pascal did not take the trouble to reply.

In a recent work devoted to Pascal's scientific activity, Pierre Humbert affirms that we have here a definite claim of priority, evidence that Descartes considered himself to be the first and true inventor of the famous experiment and claimed that Pascal was trying to cheat him of his just due. Thus it is that Pascalians endeavour to perpetuate the notion that Descartes was seeking to rival Pascal in scientific experiment and was moved by hostility and envy. Yet nowhere in the several letters of Descartes devoted to the subject is there the slightest claim to priority as such. Descartes asserts that he asked Pascal to perform the experiment and that he is interested in the results. His just complaint is that Pascal has failed to observe the elementary demands of common courtesy: "I had the right to expect this from him rather than from you." He does not stress the *priority* of his suggestion (how could this idea enter his mind since he did not then know—nor was he ever to learn—that Pascal was claiming sole rights to the experiment); he merely affirms that he made it, and expresses surprise that Pascal had not thought it worth his while to acquaint him with the results.

But if Descartes died unaware that a definite claim to priority and exclusive rights had been put forth by Pascal, the Cartesians remained to challenge it. In 1691 Adrien Baillet in his *Vie de monsieur Descartes* stated

unequivocally that the experiment of the Puy-de-Dôme had been carried out at M. Descartes' suggestion, "although M. Pascal concealed the fact." In the same year Father Daniel in his *Voyage du monde de Descartes* describes the astonishment of the philosopher when he discovered in the next world that his idea had been stolen by Pascal. In the eighteenth century, Montucla (*Histoire des mathématiques,* 1758) and Condillac both take sides with Descartes, as also do Bordas-Demoulin and Millet (*Descartes depuis 1637,* 1870) in the nineteenth. Nourrisson, in his *Pascal physicien et philosophe* (1885), "indulged in malevolent insinuations" against Pascal, as Charles Adam expressed it in an article in which he comes to Pascal's defence. With the *Port-Royal* of Sainte-Beuve, in fact, the tide had already turned, the "revival of Pascal" had begun; to Nourrisson's insinuations came replies from Ravaisson, Adam, Ernest Havet, and others. Boutroux affirmed categorically that in the very nature of things Pascal was much more likely than Descartes to accept the weight of air as the only possible explanation. The dissidents were silenced.

But not for long. In 1906, in the *Revue de Paris,* three marvellously documented articles from the pen of Félix Mathieu shattered the complacency of the Pascalians. For two hundred years the debate—a purely academic one—had been carried on between admirers of two great Frenchmen. Félix Mathieu had the bad taste to widen the debate to include not only the immediate events which led up to the Great Experiment, but the whole series of experiments which in the sixteen-forties solved the problem of the vacuum and revealed the phenomenon of atmospheric pressure. It thus became necessary to discuss Pascal's debt to the Italians and to Torricelli in particular, and in so doing Mathieu infinitely transcended the mere question of priority, in itself not very interesting or even significant; his articles constitute a profound psychological study of Pascal the man, from which students of the *Provinciales* and the *Pensées* can derive much profit.

Unfortunately for Brunschvicg, these articles appeared as he and Boutroux were on the point of bringing out the first three volumes of their monumental edition of Pascal's works, volumes covering Pascal's mathematical and scientific works up to 1654. These were to be presented in strictly chronological sequence, and Mathieu had seriously disarranged the accepted Pascalian chronology on some very important points. Brunschvicg was obliged to do some quick thinking in order to present Pascal as if nothing had happened. This is apparent in the long introduction to the first three volumes which is devoted in large part to a refutation of Mathieu's thesis, in the abundant notes and commentaries where by many a turn of phrase he attempted to evade the evidence, and at one crucial point quite simply by the alteration of a text. (These points are covered in an article by L. Rougier, in the *Mercure de France,* 1931.) Brunschvicg seemed to have had the last word. Mathieu, it is true, had replied to the earlier protests of Brunschvicg and Lefranc in particular and had had no difficulty in showing that their defence was based on points of detail, and that they had

provided no satisfactory answer to his main argument; but realizing that he was dealing with people whose minds were made up he abruptly broke off the discussion and the matter was to all intents and purposes settled.

So, at least, it would seem if one were to judge by the works devoted to Pascal during the forty years that have since elapsed, for most critics pretend that no such person had ever existed as Félix Mathieu ("or Matthieu," as Charles Péguy insultingly and with characteristic cogency of argumentation shouted in the *Cahiers de la quinzaine,* "one of the greatest imposters this earth has ever borne"). The latest example of this is a book by Pierre Humbert (*L'Œuvre scientifique de Blaise Pascal,* Paris, 1947) who from first to last, including a three-page bibliography, has the impudence to omit all reference to Mathieu's articles.

Yet there were some who, from the beginning, were willing to face the issue objectively. Abel Rey, in the *Revue de synthèse historique,* after a careful evaluation of the evidence on both sides, concluded that Mathieu's main positions had not even been breached. Father Thirion in the *Revue des questions scientifiques* gave what is the most lucid and coherent account of the events leading up to the Great Experiment; his evidence is if anything more damning to Pascal than Mathieu's, but in the end he refused to formulate a definite judgment. Gustave Lanson took the editors of Pascal mildly to task for assuming that the matter of chronology had been settled, but after that nothing more was heard for some years. The most candid appreciation of the case is given in what is undoubtedly the best general work on Pascal in any language; Morris Bishop, in his *Pascal, the Life of Genius,* has this to say: "After the publication of this article [Mathieu's] the embattled *Pascalisants* came in force to Pascal's aid. Although I think they proved their case, certain troublesome circumstances remain." Mr. Bishop does not say in virtue of what evidence he thinks their case was proved, but he is honest enough to mention the "troublesome circumstances." That is further than most critics will go. Nor should one fail to mention the thoroughly objective thesis devoted to the Great Experiment, presented in the University of Montpellier in 1925 by R. Arsovitch.

Priority in scientific experiment is difficult, and often impossible, to establish; a scientific discovery is not a work of art, it is not a "creation *ex nihilo*"; in this we can perfectly agree with Pierre Duhem, without admitting that the problem in Pascal's case is one of priority alone. It is only recently that it has been possible to write an adequate history of the experiments which led to the discovery of the barometer (cf. Cornelis de Waard, *L'Expérience barométrique,* 1936) because many essential documents have remained unpublished and difficult of access. Mersenne's "doubts" for instance concerned Torricelli's antecedents; he suspected that Torricelli's elegant experiment with the inverted tube of mercury was a culmination in a series of events ("In cuius vero mentem *prius* illa vacui cogitatio venerit et quis *prior* animadverterit collum tubi . . . scire fortassis jucundum

fuerit"), but he was unaware of the earlier experiments carried on in Rome by Berti and Magiotti. What therefore we shall endeavour to describe here is the manner in which Pascal became interested in the experiment, his particular activities in connection with it, his dubious attempts to establish the predominance of his own contribution, and also the peculiar methods of Pascalian exegesis. The question of priority will be discussed only as Pascal himself makes it necessary; and in so doing we shall be careful to obey the rules as Pascal was later to formulate them in unequivocal fashion. Even when he was preparing his apology of the Christian religion, he burst out in slashing vituperation of Father Lalouère whom he accused of stealing other people's ideas on the subject of the cycloid: "And let him not try to save himself by the attestation of some friend—who might certify he had seen his book in manuscript before the first of January. Such things are not done in matters of this kind, where publication alone counts." Torricelli died without troubling to publish abroad the success of his experiment with mercury in 1643 or his marvellously accurate interpretations of the phenomenon; Isaac Beeckman confided his ideas on the uniform propagation of air pressure to his private journal; Descartes was far from suspecting that anyone would demand universal admiration for something which in his mind was not above the level of a laboratory experiment, an experiment which he had himself suggested, as it were in passing, to a much younger man with a particular aptitude for that kind of thing. For Pascal on the contrary, publication was the main thing, publication and publicity. He it was who later cried: "Combien de royaumes nous ignorent!"

II

It was in the summer of 1644 that Mersenne received from Ricci extracts from two letters in which, as I have already mentioned, Torricelli described and interpreted his experiment with the column of mercury: "We live submerged," wrote Torricelli, "in an ocean of air, and we know by incontrovertible experiments that air has weight. The force [which causes the mercury to be suspended] comes from without: upon the surface of the liquid which is in the basin presses a column of air fifty miles high." The marvellous accuracy and completeness of this interpretation (air being compared to a liquid, and the phenomenon being explained in terms of the equilibrium of liquids) was what Pascal tried contemptuously to put aside as "a mere conjecture."

As a physicist, Mersenne had long since abandoned the essences and qualities of the Scholastics; mechanistic explanations of natural phenomena were the only ones he accepted. He was therefore not slow to recognize the importance of Torricelli's experiment, and asserted that the philosophy which satisfactorily explained the phenomenon would thereby assure its superiority over all other philosophies. He tried to repeat the experiment,

but without success. The following year he went to Rome where he saw Ricci, and on his return he stopped off in Florence to visit Torricelli, who performed the experiment for his benefit. Back in Paris, Mersenne tried once more on his own account, and again failed. Blaming his lack of success on the inferior quality of his materials, he turned to the celebrated glass-blowers of Rouen. As it happened, one of those he had interested in the experiment, Pierre Petit, inspector of fortifications, was setting out for Dieppe where he was to inspect a submarine device for remaining on the sea-floor "for five or six hours." Mersenne gave him his specifications and begged him to bring back a supply of glass tubes. In Petit's letter to Chanut of November 26, 1646, we have a detailed account of what happened. It is all perfectly clear. On his way to Dieppe, Petit passed through Rouen, where he acquainted Etienne Pascal with the nature of the experiment he and Mersenne were interested in; Etienne was delighted, writes Petit, "he asked if he might be a spectator, and if we might do it together on my return from Dieppe." Petit agreed, and when he performed the experiment, in October, 1646, both Etienne and his son Blaise, then twenty-three years of age, were there to witness it. It was an exact repetition, the first to be successfully carried out in France, of Torricelli's experiment of 1643, and this Pierre Petit categorically affirmed. Immediately there began between Petit and the two Pascals a discussion on the nature of the empty space above the column of mercury. "Mr. Pascal's son objected that the unsophisticated [*les simpliciens*] might say that this space which appeared to be empty was full of air, which in order to avoid the vacuum had entered through the pores of the glass; but I answered by asking him why in that case more air had not entered [in sufficient quantity to make] the mercury fall completely." The space, then, for all three was a vacuum; but it is to be noted that the whole discussion centred upon this point; not a word as to the *cause* of the phenomenon.

During the months that followed, Blaise Pascal carried out a number of modifications of the experiment and gave public lectures on the subject in which he unequivocally affirmed the existence of the vacuum against the opinion of Aristotelians and Cartesians alike. The inventor of the arithmetical machine took great pleasure in experimenting with tubes of various shapes and sizes, with water (as Berti had done in Rome between 1639 and 1641), and with wine (as Galileo had suggested).

Toward the end of May, 1647, Pascal left Rouen and established himself in Paris. The problems relating to the barometric tube were exciting no small amount of interest, and Mersenne was busy recording the many views that were being put forward. Pascal at this point seems to have occupied himself solely with the problem of the vacuum, but in Paris an equal interest was being manifested in the cause of the suspension of the liquid. Pascal's closest associate, Roberval, refused to accept as an explanation the weight of the atmosphere; for him the phenomenon was to be explained by a

force of attraction. Brunschvicg agrees with Mathieu that it was probably as a result of Roberval's influence that Mersenne in the last chapter of his *Reflectiones* (a work which, composed over a period of three years, was finished in October, 1647), enumerated the many possible objections to the theory of the "column of air" and expressed the opinion that the problem was insoluble. In July of that year, Mersenne received a letter from a certain Des Noyers, who had accompanied Marie de Gonzague, the wife of Wenceslas VII, to Warsaw. Des Noyers' letter contained a detailed description of an experiment with mercury, identical in every respect with Torricelli's, performed by a Capuchin monk, Father Valeriano Magni, in the Polish capital, together with a copy of Magni's published account of the experiment in which he not only claimed to be its originator, but also affirmed the existence of the vacuum. The pamphlet was entitled: *Demonstratio ocularis loci sine locato: Corporis successive moti in vacuo: Luminis nulli corpori inhaerentis;* it bore the date of July 12!

It was Roberval who replied, and his letter dated September 20 is an important document for the history of Pascal's barometric experiments. It contains the first written account of his work in Rouen, but its most interesting feature at this point is that Roberval, besides informing Des Noyers that Magni had been anticipated by Pascal, also accused the Capuchin of having lacked delicacy in not acknowledging his debt to Torricelli. ("Ignoscat mihi R. P. Capucinus Valerianus Magnus, si dixero illum *parum candide egisse* in eo libello. . . . Habeo ego Epistolam quam Clarissimus vir Evang. Toricellus . . . misit Romam ad amicum suum doctiss. virum Angelum Ricci. . . .")

In view of Pascal's convictions concerning the value of publication, we can have no difficulty in imagining the shock he must have received from Magni's brochure. We shall see in what manner he subsequently attempted to dispose of this unsuspected rival who had had the deplorable taste to forestall him. In the meantime, there was no time for delay. He hurriedly prepared his *Expériences nouvelles touchant le vide* in which he describes his variations on the experiment performed by Pierre Petit, "because," as he carefully explained, "having carried out these experiments at much expenditure of money, time and trouble, I was afraid someone else who had employed neither time, money nor trouble, forestalling me, might publish things he had not seen and which he would consequently be unable to describe with the necessary order and exactitude"—admittedly a curious way of putting it.

This then was an abridged form (an *Abrégé*) of a much more extensive treatise which Pascal promised repeatedly but which he never finished; it was published at this time in order to establish his rights and to silence any one who might take it into his head to repeat the kind of trick that Valeriano Magni had seen fit to play upon him. Pascal was careful to make the proper distinctions: "And as all honest men not only share that human inclination

of hanging on to what is theirs, but will also refuse an honour which they do not deserve, you will no doubt approve me when I defend myself not only against those who would like to cheat me of some of the experiments I herein describe and which . . . are my own invention, but also against those who would attribute to me the Italian experiment . . . for it is not my invention."

The *Abrégé* is important therefore as a means of establishing Pascal's claim as the inventor of a certain number of experiments, some of them of doubtful importance, and for its categorical affirmation of the vacuum. But it is also noteworthy because Pascal displays no interest whatever in the *cause* of the phenomenon: he merely repeats Galileo's theory of nature's limited, or mitigated, horror of a vacuum. Maxim I states: "That all bodies manifest a repugnance . . . in admitting this apparent void: that is to say, that Nature abhors this apparent void." And Maxim III says: "That the force of this horror is limited . . . and equal to the force with which a column of water approximately thirty-one feet high tends to drop." Not only does Pascal fail to mention the name of Torricelli (*parum candide egit*), but he reveals the fact that his ideas are more antiquated than those already expressed by the Italian. There is not the slightest mention of the weight of air, or atmospheric pressure.

The publishing licence of the *Abrégé* is dated October 8, 1647. A few days before it appeared Pascal received two visits, on September 22 and 23, from René Descartes. Descartes had heard much about Pascal's experiments on the vacuum from his correspondent Mersenne, although through some curious oversight Mersenne had entirely omitted to mention Torricelli's experiment in writing to the philosopher: Descartes had to wait four years in order to hear of it. This is one of the vagaries of history and can perhaps best be explained by the fact that Mersenne's mind was so completely occupied by the problems connected with the experiment that he must somehow have assumed that Descartes was familiar with it. Descartes discussed the void with Pascal in the presence of Roberval. It was of course his belief that the space in the tube was full of "subtle matter," but he disagreed equally with Roberval who maintained that the phenomenon of the column of mercury was due to the force of attraction. There is no need at this point to discuss Descartes' theory of the *tourbillons* which prevented him from ever arriving at the notion of atmospheric pressure. It is certain however that, in addition to the empty space above the mercury, he was interested in the *cause* of the phenomenon and attributed it to the external weight of the "column of air" immediately above the open surface of the mercury in the basin; and, as we have seen, Descartes on several occasions referred to the fact that in the course of these interviews he had suggested the advisability of repeating the experiment at various altitudes. He first mentions this in a letter dated exactly ten weeks after his visit, when the matter was fresh in his mind, and there is not the slightest suggestion, as we have seen, that he

was in the least conscious of any rivalry between himself and Pascal. Félix Mathieu has pointed out one very significant fact in this connection: Mersenne for some time subsequent to Descartes' sojourn in Paris and to his letter of December 13 can think and write of nothing but mountains! If the "column of air" is really the cause everybody is seeking, there is a way of proving it: the height of the mercury should vary with the altitude. Mathieu writes:

> This idea appears for the first time in the preface Mersenne added to his *Reflectiones.* The book was finished on September 8, 1647: in it Mersenne despaired of finding the solution to the problem. The preface was written after the 8th and before October 1st . . . at precisely the moment when Descartes was passing through Paris. Mersenne reverts to the explanation by the "column of air" as being not only intelligible but satisfactory: "to verify it, it would be necessary to do the experiment at different altitudes. . . ."

Mersenne went further: on January 8, 1648, he wrote to his friend Le Tenneur, presumably in Clermont, begging him to perform the experiment on the Puy-de-Dôme! Unfortunately Le Tenneur was prevented from giving Mersenne the honour of forestalling Pascal for two reasons, the one, geographical, being that he happened to be in Tours at the time; the other reason was mental: "Furthermore," he wrote in answer to Mersenne, "I shall tell you that I think, along with Roberval, that it would be trouble wasted, and that at the top the same result would be attained as down below." Decidedly, Mersenne's luck was out. It should be noted moreover that Pascal's closest associate was of the same opinion as Le Tenneur. It is at this point that Arsovitch asks why, if Descartes was sensitive about his priority rights, he did not complain of Mersenne's preface.

In the meantime, Pascal, having published his *Expériences nouvelles,* found himself engaged in a controversy with Father Etienne Noel, the rector of the Jesuit college of Clermont in Paris. Father Noel had formerly been one of Descartes' professors at La Flèche. In his letters to Pascal in defence of the plenum, he revealed himself to be a kindly, courteous, open-minded, and generous opponent. The same cannot be said of Pascal, even though his reply to Noel's first letter can be justly admired as a masterly exposition of the experimental method. Noel may have been addicted to the *a priori* reasoning of the School, but he was no fool: he had a very clear idea as to how far a man in his position could go in publishing his ideas, and what he said in his published works was not always identical with what he wrote in private to Blaise Pascal. These variations called forth Pascal's jeering sarcasms which do little to enhance our opinion of either his character or his judgment. In his second letter to Pascal, Noel pays homage to the ability of his younger colleague, asserting that the latter's reply to his first letter has caused him to change some of his opinions, and in closing he states: "If I were not laid up with a poor leg, I should do myself the honour of going to see you." This courteous suggestion met with

no response. Pascal did not take the trouble to visit Noel or even to answer him, for which he later gave some very strange reasons. Noel's letter seems to have profoundly irritated him. Why? Can it be that his correspondent had broached the subject of the *cause,* and had quite correctly explained it in terms of atmospheric pressure? And this before Pascal had given any signs of arriving at similar conclusions? In view of what we know of Pascal's insistence on priority rights in such matters, we can understand why he would like to give Noel's second letter as little publicity as possible, especially as Valeriano Magni had managed to get into print three months before him on the subject of the vacuum.

III

In the year following Pascal's death, his sister Gilberte and her husband Florin Périer published his *Traités de l'equilibre des liqueurs et de la pesanteur de la masse de l'air* to which was joined the *Récit de la Grande Expérience de l'equilibre des liqueurs* with the following note: "On a aussi trouvé parmy les papiers de Monsieur Paschal un imprimé de l'Année 1648, de l'experience celebre faite en ce temps là sur la montagne du Puy de Domme en Auvergne. . . ." The *Récit* included the copy of Périer's letter to Pascal of September 22 and also a copy of a *Lettre de monsieur Pascal le jeune à monsieur Périer, du 15 novembre 1647.*

This letter of November 15 is the crux of Mathieu's argument against Pascal and the *tarte à la crème* of Pascal's defenders. For the latter, it is enough that Pascal so dated it. Félix Mathieu is not so easily satisfied: he has brought powerful arguments to bear—as yet never satisfactorily answered by the Pascalians—which seem to show that Pascal deliberately antedated this letter, and also that it was never really published by him at all.

It is in fact an amazing document. Pascal is writing to his brother-in-law with instructions to carry out the experiment with mercury on the Puy-de-Dôme. Although he asserts that Périer has very recently ("ces jours passés") been in Paris, he gives him in most serious and doctoral fashion a tedious account of his reflections on the vacuum, things with which Périer must have been exceedingly familiar if he had recently spent any time in Pascal's company. The letter reads exactly like a prospectus addressed to the public, and it is for this reason that Gustave Lanson affirmed that he for one had never taken it to be anything else, that it was simply "un morceau de littérature"; nor did Lanson take the date of November 15 very seriously: how could an Auvergnat suggest in November to another Auvergnat that he go to the top of a mountain which both knew to be inaccessible at that time of year. This may be good enough to fool Parisians, but for the people of Clermont, who see the Puy-de-Dôme from the Place de Jaude, it is "pur verbiage."

Not that Pascal was trying to deceive anybody, Lanson hastily adds. Nevertheless, if the date is accepted seriously by historians, he has certainly succeeded in deceiving a good many. For this date upsets the chronology established by all other evidence. After entertaining Périer with the history of his doubts and hesitations which explained why in his published *Abrégé* he attributed the column of mercury to Nature's horror of a vacuum, whereas all along his real belief was that "these effects should be attributed to the weight and pressure of the atmosphere," Pascal goes on to remind his brother-in-law that during the latter's recent visit, *ces jours passés,* he had shown him an experiment which was nothing less than a vacuum within a vacuum. It was in fact a remarkable bit of experimental ingenuity that made it possible to carry out the Torricellian experiment in the vacuum of another Torricellian tube. "You saw," writes Pascal, "that the quicksilver of the inner tube fell completely, . . . when, by means of the vacuum with which it was surrounded, it was no longer pressed or counterbalanced by any air." This is exactly what Torricelli had predicted would happen in his letter of June 28, 1644.

If this did not prove that air pressure was the cause of the phenomenon, one wonders what further evidence of the fact could be obtained in performing the experiment at different altitudes. Without exception, Pascal's contemporaries, including Roberval, accepted this experiment as decisive. Nothing, however, is more edifying than Pascal's extreme reluctance to abandon without due consideration the principles "which have come down to us from Antiquity"—and Brunschvicg has done his best to believe and to induce others to believe with Pascal that nature's horror of a vacuum could still explain the effects of the "vacuum in the vacuum" and that no definitive conclusion could be reached without the Puy-de-Dôme: the importance of the Great Experiment must at all costs be safeguarded.

But all the known evidence goes to show that whoever the inventor might be, the experiment of the vacuum within a vacuum was not performed before the month of May, 1648 (and in the form that Pascal describes in his letter it could certainly not have been performed until much later). Mathieu has fixed the moment at which it became known to the scientific world: as late as May 31, Mersenne, writing to Hevelius, has given up all hope of solving the mystery of the column of mercury, and expresses the belief it will not be solved until a more fortunate epoch; and on July 3, Theodor Haak, one of the founders of the Royal Society, writing from London to Mersenne in answer to his "esteemed letter of June 12," says: "I do not yet know how to perform your most recent experiment consisting of one tube inside another which [causes the mercury to fall completely in the first], not yet having been able to do it successfully." Strangely enough, it is in June that Pascal's closest associate, Roberval, who until then had stoutly maintained his theory of attraction, for the first time asserts that the outside pressure of the air is the cause. And yet another coincidence: the purely fortuitous discovery by

Tannery, in the Imperial Library of Vienna, of the correspondence of Le Tenneur, reveals what until the end of the nineteenth century was an unknown historical fact: Périer could not possibly have been in Paris in the weeks preceding November 15, 1647. On the other hand, he was certainly in Paris in June, 1648.

Everything points to the fact that the letter dated November 15, 1647, in which Pascal gives instructions for the Great Experiment was written, *at the earliest,* in June, 1648. If this is so, why then did Pascal deliberately date it eight months earlier? Quite simply, to establish his rights of priority. Until June, 1648, Pascal to all intents and purposes is in the camp of those who hold to the traditional notion of Nature's *fuga vacui.* The vacuum in the vacuum has suddenly revealed the correctness of the opposite theory—the theory already arrived at in Italy by Torricelli, and in France by Descartes and Father Noel. Pascal disposes of Torricelli—Italy is a long way off—by never referring to him. But Noel might suddenly feel inclined to publish his reply of *November, 1647* (which Pascal had thought best not to answer, and about which he was most discreetly silent); and then there were the interviews with Descartes in which, on Jacqueline's own evidence, the philosopher had strongly affirmed the external nature of the cause, and according to his own affirmation had suggested the experiment at various altitudes.

Brunschvicg and Strowski ridicule Pascal's attackers by pointing out that Pascal, if he had been trying to get ahead of Descartes, must have been a fearful idiot not to date his letter earlier than the meeting in September. Pascal in fact would have been a much greater idiot had he done so. He had to be careful not to antedate his own published *Abrégé* of October 8, in which he affirmed the *fuga vacui,* and also his letter to Noel, written in November. The best he could do under these circumstances was to date his letter as early as possible in November, suggesting that at that time the idea of the Puy-de-Dôme was not new to him.

But there was something else that had to be taken care of. If there is one thing that is perfectly clear from a reading of this document, it is Pascal's anxiety to explain that the experiment of the vacuum in the vacuum was not conclusive, and in no way diminished the necessity or the importance of the experiment on the Puy-de-Dôme. It has been assumed, and Gilberte Périer affirmed it, that Pascal was the one who first performed this decisive experiment. Aside from Gilberte's hagiographical prose, the only other contemporary to attribute it to Pascal was precisely Father Noel in his *Gravitas comparata;* but this affirmation must be treated with a certain reserve, especially as Noel describes an experiment which is not the one described by Pascal. On the other hand, the celebrated Jean Pecquet affirmed quite definitely in 1651 that the experiment was the work of Adrien Auzout, Pascal's friend and associate in Rouen. ("Lubet etiam . . . te vacui in vacuo, tentatum primo feliciter acutissimi Auzotii sagacitate. . . . Experimentum condocefacere".) Auzout was a remarkable man in the laboratory,

but he cared little for publication. Pecquet's statement was naturally embarrassing to Pascal's editors, but because Mathieu had used this document, they were obliged to include it in their forthcoming edition of Pascal's works. The difficulty was met by a very simple device: the omission of the word *primo* (see vol. III, p. 238); Pecquet is simply made to say that Auzout successfully performed it—his claim to priority is quietly suppressed. After all, how many people have access to Pecquet's *Dissertatio de circulatione sanguinis et chyli motu?*

Yet whoever it was who first performed this experiment, for those who are familiar with Pascal's attitude of mind on these matters there is one very clear proof that it is at least not his: he himself is careful never to claim it. At a moment when he is most harshly asserting his rights and triumphantly announcing the importance of the Great Experiment, credit for which is due to him alone, there is one experiment he does not once refer to as his own, and that is the vacuum in the vacuum. Nor is it likely that Pascal, having himself invented it in 1647, was keeping it for publication at some convenient and dramatic moment. We have seen how he was stirred by Magni's brochure into a hurried composition of his *Abrégé;* it is not probable he would have allowed himself to be caught napping a second time if in his portfolio he possessed the answer to the problem that was then absorbing the whole world of science.

If then it is true that the date of November 15 is a falsification, how could Pascal possibly have the impudence to publish his letter under this date in his *Récit* of 1648? Would it not be denounced immediately by those who could not help knowing the facts? The answer most probably is that he had it printed in 1648 but did not publish it, that it appeared for the first time posthumously in Périer's edition of 1663. Mathieu has given us the strange story of the *Récit* of 1648, which was printed without licence or permission, and which seems to have passed, if distributed it was, almost unnoticed. At least in part. For the brochure dated 1648 (which includes along with Pascal's shout of triumph, a copy of the letter of questionable date addressed to Périer, a copy of Périer's letter to Pascal of September 22, 1648, and the *Relation de l'experience faite par monsieur Périer*) was evidently printed at two different times. Mathieu has shown that between folios A and B on the one hand, and folios C, D, E, on the other, there is a difference in the quality of the type, a difference in the number of lines per page, and differences in spelling. Furthermore every single reference made to the *Récit* by contemporaries who saw it (we have seen that Descartes was not one of these) seems to indicate that the persons concerned were unaware of anything contained in Pascal's letter to Périer. Some contemporary writers refer to the experiment as being due to Florin Périer: they could not possibly be ignorant of the facts if Pascal's letter had been included in the *Récit*. Father Maignan who was associated with the earlier Italian experiments long before Pascal had ever heard of them, says only that the results of the Puy-de-

Dôme were given by Périer, "ut habetur in praeclara eius ad Pascalem epistola hac de re Parisiis anno 1648 edita"; he does not mention the contents of the letter dated November, and, as pointed out by Arsovitch, in an analysis of a hundred pages devoted to the vacuum in his *Cursus philosophicus* there is not one word concerning the vacuum in the vacuum. When Descartes asks Carcavi for information about the experiment, Carcavi replies that it has already been performed and that it is already in print: he does not send Descartes a copy, but gives him a summary of Périer's letter to Pascal, and it is evident that Carcavi knows nothing of the claims made by Pascal in his letter to Périer. Furthermore, it is certain that Jean Pecquet had seen no printed account of the vacuum in the vacuum.

In short, all the known evidence goes to show that the famous letter was written after the event; that it was intended to safeguard Pascal's claims to priority, not only with regard to Descartes and possibly Noel, but in particular with regard to the laboratory experiment of the vacuum in the vacuum. But more than anything else, it was meant to convey the idea that this experiment had in no way lessened the importance of the Great Experiment, that it was an inconclusive preliminary to the Puy-de-Dôme. Whereas it is evident that of the two experiments it is the vacuum in the vacuum which most conclusively proves that the suspension of mercury is due to the *extrinsic* cause of atmospheric pressure. Pascal claims that the Puy-de-Dôme is still necessary "since it is certain that the weight of the air is greater at the foot of the mountain than on the top." He thus completely reverses the situation, for with the known results of the vacuum in the vacuum, and the principle of the barometer being established, the Great Experiment proved *not* what Pascal claimed still to be seeking, but the very fact which he and others had taken for granted, namely the variations of atmospheric pressure at different altitudes.

The epilogue to the Great Experiment is furnished by Pascal himself. It is contained in a *Lettre de M. Pascal le fils addressante à M. le Premier Président de la Cour des Aydes de Clermont Ferrand, sur le subjet de ce qui s'est passé en sa présence dans le Collège des Jesuites de Montferrand, aux thèses de philosophie qui luy ont esté dediées et qui ont esté soubtenues le 25 juin 1651,* known as the letter to Ribeyre. In it Pascal states that, in the presentation of the theses mentioned, the candidate had affirmed that there were "certain persons claiming to be the inventors of a certain experiment of which Torricelli was the author, and which had been performed in Poland; that these persons, wishing to attribute it to themselves, after having performed it in Normandy had published it in Auvergne."

Pascal, thus attacked, this time insisted on hurriedly publishing his reply before Ribeyre, who claimed to have no recollection of the incident, had a chance to investigate the matter. In his anger, Pascal desires to acquaint the Jesuit with the history of the affair "from the beginning." In answer to the first accusation (that of neglecting to attribute the experiment

to its proper author), he affirms: "on every possible occasion, I have never failed to say that this experiment came from Italy, and that it is the invention of Torricelli." And Thiriot is quite right in observing that Pascal could very well have said so on many an occasion, but that he never once committed the statement to print. Twice only, Thiriot continues, did the name of Torricelli ever appear over Pascal's signature, and that was when he accused Noel of indelicately forgetting to quote him. Father Thiriot might have added that this text is in Pascal's letter to Le Pailleur, a letter Pascal never published, and which was first printed by Bossut in 1779!

Pascal continues: "In the year 1644, the Reverend Father Mersenne received word that this Experiment had been performed in Italy, without any specifications as to the name of the author, so that we were left in ignorance on that point." As mentioned earlier, Mersenne was in some doubt about Torricelli's antecedents, but he knew perfectly well that Torricelli had performed the experiment in the form which Petit was to repeat under the eyes of Pascal in Rouen. Nor was Petit in any doubt on the matter, and Pascal possessed a copy of his letter to Chanut. But Pascal asserts in spite of this that as late as October, 1647, in publishing his *Abrégé,* he was only able to say that the experiment was of Italian origin. "But as we were impatient to know the identity of the Inventor, we wrote to Rome, to Del Pozzo, who long after my *Abrégé* was printed informed us that Torricelli was in fact the author." This is the story that Pascal is so anxious to circulate in 1651.

The second point concerned Magni's experiment in Warsaw. Pascal's reply is a cool accusation of plagiarism against the Capuchin: "Let him [Pascal's accuser] then know that I performed this experiment in 1646 . . . that in 1647 I printed an account of all my experiments; that my brochure was sent to Poland . . . and that a year later Father Valeriano performed this Torricellian experiment." At this point, even Brunschvicg is forced to admit the astonishing inaccuracy of Pascal's chronology: Magni is accused of taking the idea of an experiment he performed in July, 1647, from a work Pascal published the following October! Pascal continues: "The worthy Father printed an account of this experiment which was sent immediately to us; and we were very much surprised to see he had taken credit for *Torricelli's Experiment.*" Pascal's indignation is assuredly edifying, and some have allowed themselves to be edified: "Nothing," writes H. F. Stewart in his *Secret of Pascal,* "could be more dignified than his [Pascal's] readiness to give honour where it is due in scientific experiment; cf. his letter to Ribeyre of July 12, 1651." Yet Professor Stewart must have known, or should have known, the belated nature of this recognition, wrung from Pascal at a time when he himself was on the defensive; it is no slight exaggeration to speak of Pascal's "readiness."

Pascal then proceeds to silence his unnamed adversary with documentary evidence: "And if the worthy Father needs further proof, let him know that

Valeriano was refuted . . . by M. de Roberval in particular . . . *who used my printed article* as a means of convincing him; this he did in a fine letter written and published in Latin . . . in which he states . . . that in 1647 I had printed my account . . . that my printed articles had been seen that year throughout Europe and even in Poland; and finally that there was no doubt but what he [Magni] had done the experiment according to the indications he had seen in my brochure."

How could such a wealth of detail fail to be convincing! Yet Roberval could not have said all this in September about something not printed before October 8. In this case, however, we are not reduced to conjecture: Roberval's letter exists, and not a single word of what Pascal has "quoted" is to be found in it.

In the remainder of his letter to Ribeyre, Pascal outlines the events leading up to the Great Experiment, destined to test Torricelli's "simple conjecture." The account of this experiment was scattered far and wide, and "was received with joy, as it had been impatiently awaited." We have seen that the *Récit* did not reach Descartes, for one, and none of the expressions of joy have come down to us. In fact, as we have seen, most of Pascal's contemporaries were unaware of its existence, and even his heirs, who printed it in 1663, seem to have seen it for the first time after his death. As for the most decisive event of all, the experiment of the vacuum in the vacuum, there is no mention of it in the letter to Ribeyre. And Pascal concludes: "It is true, sir, and I say it boldly, that this Experiment is my invention; and therefore I can say that the new knowledge it has given us, is entirely due to me." We have therefore Pascal's word for it, published more than a year after the philosopher's death, that Descartes had nothing to do with it; for that matter, neither had Mersenne nor the vacuum in the vacuum. It is regrettable that this claim should be made in a letter in which so many inaccuracies occur. Mathieu used a stronger word, and Louis Havet ingenuously confessed: "everyone would say these were lies, if it were anyone else than Blaise Pascal."

In this letter, then, as in the letter to Périer dated November 15, 1647, as in the letter to Le Pailleur, we have evidence for Mathieu's interpretation that Pascal sometimes gave way to the urge to rearrange events as he would have wished them to happen. A victim of pain and illness, living for long periods in solitude, did he indulge in such imaginings? The fact that he never published some of the incriminating documents might easily lend support to this view.

Historians of Pascal, however, through too great an eagerness to accept these documents uncritically, have exaggerated unduly two aspects of Pascal: they have magnified the myth of what Chateaubriand called "cet effrayant génie," and they have suggested that his reluctance to publish certain of his writings is attributable to his scorn of human learning and to his devotion to a Higher Truth.

"IN MY MIND'S EYE, HORATIO"

Roy McKeen Wiles

THE average theatre-goer probably does not know that the Greek root of the word "drama" implies action or doing; he does not know that Aristotle's definition of tragedy in the sixth chapter of his *Poetics* includes the phrase that serious drama is properly "in the form of action, not of narrative." Yet to him the idea that the dramatist might *tell* some of his story instead of showing it on the stage would seem preposterous: a play is a play, to be shown, not related; and most play-goers instinctively look upon verbal descriptions and second-hand reports as disappointing substitutes for action itself.

Aristotle is not the only critic to support the play-goer's intuitive objection to this verbal substitution in drama. Horace puts the matter bluntly in the *Ars Poetica*. Having made the simple observation that in plays "a thing either is done on the stage or is reported as having been done off-stage," he goes on to declare, in substance, that "things which are communicated through the ear strike the mind less forcefully than those which are performed right before the trusted eyes and which the spectator sees for himself."[1] And Samuel Johnson in the *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare (1765) declares just as dogmatically that, "Narration in dramatic poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive and obstructs the progress of the action." To most people these statements are rudimentary axioms. What could be more obvious?

Yet no one would require every last detail of incidental action to be set forth on the stage as "business." It is only reasonable that certain preliminary or merely accessory details of action should be set before the audience by means of report in order to save time and to concentrate attention on the major dramatic issues. It is evident also that crowds and acts of violence can usually be more conveniently described than exhibited. Anyone who examines Shakespeare's plays carefully, however, will see at once that, in addition to the kinds of scene already suggested, there are numerous passages in which the dramatist apparently preferred to describe or narrate rather than to exhibit, even when stage action could very easily have been managed.

To illustrate, it is not just Shakespeare's fondness for words that leads him to have Charmian remind Cleopatra of a mischievous prank played upon the gullible Antony when the great lovers went fishing together:

> 'Twas merry when
> You wager'd on your angling; when your diver

[1]Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 179 ff.

> Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he
> With fervency drew up.

Cleopatra herself remembers more revealing details of that episode, and continues:

> That time,—O times!—
> I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night
> I laugh'd him into patience; and next morn,
> Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
> Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
> I wore his sword Philippan.[2]

This verbal vignette is picturesque and entertaining; but it is more than that: it tells in less than ten lines as much as a whole scene could have told about the Egyptian temptress toying with her mighty Roman. Having heard this tale of ignominious foolery an audience will thereafter see Antony the world-conqueror in a new light. Something of his masterful dignity has slipped away from him. Motion-picture producers would probably take time to exhibit the incident; but Shakespeare knew that words could do it as well.

Similarly, in the second scene of *Julius Caesar,* Cassius attempts to turn Brutus against the growing Caesar by telling of particular occasions on which he showed himself to be no superman but only a puny mortal like any other citizen.[3] Cassius could have made the reason for his antagonism to Caesar perfectly clear without any reference to the swimming match in the Tiber; but Shakespeare, wishing to enliven the discourse and at the same time to show how much the ringleader of Caesar's opponents despised him, invented an incident—at least it is not mentioned in Plutarch's life of Caesar—which in the telling takes only forty or fifty seconds, yet discloses as much about Caesar's weakness as the fishing yarn about Antony's folly.

These items of antecedent history are set forth very briefly. As a rule, English dramatists avoid using narrative passages of any considerable length at the beginnings of plays. They know that their audiences are impatient to get on with the story, preferring to meet the *dramatis personae* immediately without having to listen to preparatory explanations. Yet Shakespeare is not always concise. The long relations of antecedent history by Aegeon at the beginning of *The Comedy of Errors* may be explained as the work of a young dramatist, a novice who has not yet learned the difference between stage-play and story-book. It is more difficult to account for Prospero's slow-moving reminiscent narrative of well over a hundred lines in the second scene of *The Tempest;* though it is given some dramatic life and interest by frequent interruptions—eighteen of them in a speech not much longer than Aegeon's.

[2] *Antony and Cleopatra,* II. v. 15 ff. Plutarch mentions the fishing episode in his account of Antony.

[3] *Julius Caesar,* I. ii. 93 ff.

So much for narrative as used for recapitulation. What of actions that do strictly come within the compass of a play? When Dryden asserts in his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* that "some parts of the action are more fit to be represented, some to be related," he is merely repeating a critical commonplace also found in Horace's *Ars Poetica* and in the writings of other commentators (Castelvetro, Giraldi Cinthio, and Corneille, for example) who reiterate and expand the pronouncements of Aristotle. The real question is, which parts are "more fit" to be related?

The problem is especially acute if the story includes crowds or acts of violence, or both. Obviously an army is something of a problem for the theatre, and two armies engaged in battle on "the vasty fields of France" are next to impossible to exhibit convincingly unless the wider range of the motion-picture film is employed, as in Olivier's recent production of *Henry V*. "What is more ridiculous," asks Dryden's Lisideius, "than to represent an army with a drum and five men behind it?" Fully aware of the problem he faces, Shakespeare will not let his *Henry V* begin until the players themselves ask for the audience's co-operation. "Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts," the Chorus pleads. But Shakespeare is skilful enough to make words work for him, enabling the audience to see in the mind's eye what the stage itself cannot adequately show. And words can do it, as one short passage will show. When the over-confident French suffer a crushing defeat at the hands of Henry's despised and outnumbered "band of brothers" at Agincourt, multitudes of French princes and peasants mingle their blood in death. Mountjoy's description of the slaughter is most graphic:

> . . . and their wounded steeds
> Fret fetlock deep in gore, and with wild rage
> Yerk out their armed heels at their dead masters,
> Killing them twice.[4]

This violence, and in fact all the confusion of ancient warfare, cannot easily be shown; but words can make the inward eye see all of it that matters.

If crowding the stage with a milling throng of fighters, however, only bewilders the audience, then crowding the mind's eye with a verbal description of a large mob will be equally confusing—or more so—unless explicit reference draws attention to particular individuals or groups in the multitude. When Junius Brutus, the tribune, describes the excited Romans crowding the streets and straddling ridgepoles to catch a glimpse of Caius Marcius returning once again as a conquering hero, he leaves no vague impression of a thronging populace; he lets us see bespectacled old folks, prattling nurses, scullery maids, priests, and veiled dames, all excited and all talking about the arrogant but successful "Coriolanus."[5] Another late play, *Henry VIII*, has in the final act a most rollicking account of a similar outburst of enthusiasm, this time when an unruly London mob crowds into the palace yard to celebrate a royal christening. The porter's sturdy assistant has had a

[4] *Henry V*, IV. vii. 81 ff.

[5] *Coriolanus*, II. i. 221 ff. and 278 ff.

good deal of trouble with the noisy rabble, and has even broken his four-foot cudgel over their heads, but ruefully admits that, not being Samson, he has lacked strength to "mow 'em down."[6] He reports a few particular encounters, first with a red-nosed brazier, then with a haberdasher's wife, whose "pink'd porringer" hat fell off in the mêlée, and it is these particularities that give the scene life.

It was probably not Shakespeare but John Fletcher or someone else, however, who wrote this scene in *Henry VIII,* for Shakespeare had done this sort of reporting far better in a play written in his apprentice days nearly twenty years earlier. When Hubert, in *King John,* describes the amazement and anxiety of the chattering citizens excitedly exchanging rumours of death and invasion it is as though a motion-picture camera had caught their very gestures and agitated features:

> Young Arthur's death is common in their mouths;
> And when they talk of him, they shake their heads
> And whisper one another in the ear;
> And he that speaks doth gripe the hearer's wrist,
> Whilst he that hears makes fearful action
> With wrinkled brows, with nods, with rolling eyes.
> I saw a smith stand with his hammer, thus,
> The whilst his iron did on the anvil cool,
> With open mouth swallowing a tailor's news;
> Who, with his shears and measure in his hand,
> Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste
> Had falsely thrust upon contrary feet,
> Told of many thousand warlike French
> That were embattailed and rank'd in Kent.
> Another lean unwash'd artificer
> Cuts off his tale and talks of Arthur's death.[7]

These sixteen lines really accomplish a great deal for the dramatist and for the audience. So strong is the effect of immediacy that even the theatre-goer who insists on being shown all the action will find himself surprisingly near that open-mouthed blacksmith and the news-tattling tailor.

All these "relations" may seem to be no more than examples of an obvious principle—that a dramatist tells what he cannot show. Yet the principle is by no means so simple as it seems, and it is not true that narration used in place of action is invariably a feeble makeshift. Ophelia's death cannot possibly be exhibited; but the report of the distressful accident accentuates the pathos. Exception has been taken to the length of the Queen's speech, to her enumeration of the flowers in Ophelia's garlands, and even to Gertrude's failure to have the poor girl rescued, since obviously someone—perhaps the Queen herself—had seen her floating about buoyed up by her clothes! In response to these objections let it be remarked that this is a play, not a newspaper; it is not a question of how the drowning did really happen. If, moreover, it were only the fact that needed to be

[6]His actual words. See *Henry VIII,* V. iv. 22 ff.
[7]*King John,* IV. ii. 187 ff.

announced, the Queen should go no further than to say, "Your sister's drowned, Laertes." Both the Queen and Shakespeare are wise enough (as some commentators are not) to see that the announcement will produce maximum effect if it includes physical details that compel us to witness in our mind's eye the shocking alteration from a singing girl in charming surroundings to a cold, lifeless corpse in the turgid depths of a pool under a willow tree. To have dispatched Ophelia in briefer, blunter, less poetically suggestive terms would have been to underemphasize one of the most moving and most consequential incidents in the play. Every single image in the passage contributes to the pathetic effect which is mainly intended.

Words may also achieve very satisfying comic effects not otherwise producible—that is, without offence—as when Ariel tells Prospero how he has lured Caliban, Stephano, and Trinculo to fitting and malodorous punishment in the "filthy-mantled pool."[8] The same can be said about Launce's indignant accounts of his misbehaving dog, Crab, in that very early comedy, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.[9] A few years later, in fashioning *The Taming of the Shrew* from an earlier play of unknown authorship, Shakespeare (and his collaborator, if any) had naturally to give particular emphasis to Petruchio's violence. An important half-way point in the taming of Katherina is the wedding, to which Petruchio comes tardily and in "unreverent robes." His "mad attire" and his sway-backed Rosinante are colourfully described in advance by Biondello, but a far more dynamic word-picture comes from the lips of Gremio a little later in the same scene. No doubt to avoid offending the ecclesiastical authorities, but partly also because Shakespeare knew how well a dozen lines could depict the madcap pranks of Petruchio, the wedding ceremony is described, not exhibited. The effect is to produce farce without offence. Gremio's eye and ear have missed nothing. His report compels us to see and hear everything in the episode that contributes to the comedy, most amusingly perhaps in the reference to Petruchio's noisy, triumphant kiss implanted on the lips of Katherina:

> I'll tell you, Sir Lucentio: when the priest
> Should ask, if Katherine should be his wife,
> "Ay, by gogs-wouns," quoth he; and swore so loud
> That, all-amaz'd, the priest let fall the book;
> And, as he stoop'd again to take it up,
> The mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff
> That down fell priest and book. . . .
> But after many ceremonies done,
> He calls for wine. "A health!" quoth he, as if
> He'd been aboard, carousing to his mates
> After a storm; quaff'd off the muscadel,
> And threw the sops all in the sexton's face,
> Having no other reason
> But that his beard grew thin and hungerly,
> And seem'd to ask him sops as he was drinking.

[8] *The Tempest*, IV. i. 171 ff.
[9] *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. iii. 5 ff., and IV. iv. 1 ff.

> This done, he took the bride about the neck
> And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack
> That at the parting all the church did echo.[10]

Small wonder that Gremio, shocked by Petruchio's impudent levity, has had to withdraw "for very shame," but his report of the details is uproariously comic.

With effects which can only be called tragic-comic there is in Shakespeare's late play, *The Winter's Tale,* a report of more extraordinary violence. Here a clownish lout tells his father about two wondrous sights which have brought a rush of words to his excited lips. One is the loss of many souls by shipwreck in a storm; the other is the eating of Antigonus by a bear. "And," he exclaims,

> to see how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone . . . . and how the poor gentleman roared and the bear mock'd him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather!
>
> "Name of mercy, when was this, boy?" asks his father.
>
> Now, now; I have not wink'd since I saw these sights. The men are not yet cold under water, nor the bear half din'd on the gentleman. He's at it now![11]

One could hardly demand a closer view of violent death than the breathless yokel gives so graphically, but the effect is not depressing. The romantic nature of the play demands no tears for Antigonus except the widowed Paulina's; it is enough that he and the others in the ship be removed from the action once the infant Perdita is deposited on the sea-coast of Bohemia. Shakespeare removes them with startling finality, and the Clown's gruesome report is one more example of how well a verbal description may both brighten the texture of a play and serve in place of action not very easily shown.

There are a few memorable incidents which Shakespeare describes instead of exhibiting them not because they present difficulties of staging but because, as the audience in each case is fully aware, they did not take place at all. Notable for its tragic consequences is the scene in which Iago, with ingenious realism, tells the sensitive Othello such a tale of Cassio's intimacy with Desdemona as makes the troubled Moor cry out furiously, "I'll tear her all to pieces!"[12] In a far different mood the telling of another great lie constitutes one of the most entertaining scenes in all comic drama. It is that priceless scene in the first part of *Henry IV* in which Sir John Falstaff—stretching the truth with his usual gusto—gives a blow-by-blow account of his battle with those rogues in buckram.[13]

[10] *The Taming of the Shrew,* III. ii. 160 ff.
[11] *The Winter's Tale,* III. iii. 96 ff.
[12] *Othello,* III. iii. 413 ff.
[13] *I Henry IV,* II. iv. 126 ff. Devotees of Sir John will recall his other lengthy account of misadventure—this time, alas, too true—the affair of the buckbasket and the Datchet-lane dousing in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (III. v). Once again Sir John himself is the gullible victim as well as the reporter, and once again it is the *telling* of the incident that produces the major comic effect.

In another comedy, *Much Ado about Nothing,* the central, pivotal event of the action is a deception which could have been shown but is rendered more acceptable because it is reported. How wise it was to avoid showing on stage Don John's misleading of Claudio into believing his beloved Hero unfaithful on the very eve of their wedding day! Borachio's story to Conrade is perfectly clear and sufficiently convincing in a romantic comedy at least;[14] but had the scene been shown on stage we should not have believed our eyes. Although Claudio and Don Pedro were both convinced that they saw Hero leaning from her chamber window in intimate conversation with a strange man, the audience would not so easily be misled; and if we in the audience could see through the trick we should be impatient with Claudio, who ought to know better, for not seeing through it. As it is, we unhesitatingly engage in the willing suspension of disbelief. Like the Falstaff scenes already mentioned, this particular episode in *Much Ado about Nothing* has something of the *scène à faire* about it, since we have been led to expect a sequel to Don John's invitation in the previous scene: "If you will follow me, I will show you enough."[15]

This arousing and then satisfying keen anticipation is a fundamental principle for achieving vitality in a play, as all students of drama are aware. It is not at first apparent, however, that sometimes a narration may satisfy that eagerness quite as well as action itself. No play of Shakespeare's provides a better illustration of this fact than *The Winter's Tale.* At the end of Act IV the audience looks forward with keen anticipation to the reconciliation of the two kings, estranged from each other for sixteen years, and to the other great joy we see to be in store for Leontes, the recovery of the daughter he has long supposed dead. But Shakespeare has kept in reserve one completely unexpected feature of the *dénouement.* Defying the laws of probability the dramatist alters the conclusion of the story as Robert Greene wrote it in *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* and terminates the comedy with a most audacious piece of stage business, the restoration of Queen Hermione, whom all this time the audience and everyone else except Perdita have supposed dead. As Shakespeare sits down to write Act V, then, his dramaturgic problem is twofold: how to manage all the separate details of identification and reconciliation in the Perdita-Leontes-Florizel-Polixenes story, and how to achieve maximum effect in bringing the "statue" of Hermione to life. Keeping in mind that this *is* a winter's tale, that Shakespeare has deliberately planned a surprise ending, and that nevertheless all the other threads of the story must be left tidy, one can see that his technique in exhibiting only the most exciting, unexpected event and relating all the others is admirable. To have reversed the process and to have related the "resurrection" of Hermione would have been as great a blunder as it would have been to bring in Hermione before clearing up the other matters. As Pauline says

[14] *Much Ado about Nothing,* III. iii. 153 ff.
[15] *Ibid.,* III. ii. 123 ff.

> That she is living,
> Were it but told you, should be hooted at
> Like an old tale.[16]

The revival of Hermione has either to be shown or omitted from the story. It is shown, and, as the First Gentleman remarks, "Who would be thence that has the benefit of access?"[17]

To have exhibited the recognition of Perdita by Leontes, however, and the reconciliation of the two kings as they find their offspring so happily betrothed would have disturbed the proportions of the play to no good purpose, since the audience knows that these developments are inevitable. The great moments of discovery, when they come, will be tremendous for the kings and for Perdita, but something less for the audience. As it is, the Third Gentleman gives a very clear account of the emotional conduct of the reunited persons, though even he admits that the encounter "lames report to follow it and undoes description to do it."[18] If Shakespeare does not give us the "benefit of access" to all these expected encounters let us be grateful that by reducing them to narrative he has avoided anti-climax and has spared us from a far greater amount of story-telling, for Perdita, Leontes, and Hermione all have to fill in a conversational gap of sixteen years—to say nothing of Camillo and Paulina. As the latter wisely observes, "There's time enough for that"[19]—after the play is over.

It is to more highly concentrated drama, however, that one must turn to see a man of genius deliberately preferring report to action, not driven to it by necessity. Notable examples may be found in *Julius Caesar, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth.* In each instance an important action of the central figure is brought before the audience by means of words; and in each instance the report accomplishes far more than the visible action itself could have accomplished, for it shows how deeply that action has affected the person who is chiefly concerned. The passages may be examined in the order in which the respective plays were written.

In making an exciting play about Julius Caesar out of Sir Thomas North's plain English prose (based on Amyot's French version of Plutarch), Shakespeare could hardly avoid giving prominence to an episode related twice by Plutarch,[20] namely Mark Antony's attempt to place a laurel crown on Caesar's brow, and Caesar's rejection of it in the presence of the people. Besides drawing attention to the incident itself Shakespeare had also to show how much Caesar's powerful opponents despised him. Soon after the play opens, Cassius is shown trying to persuade Brutus to oppose Caesar. The two men have not gone to the market-place to witness the running of the "holy

[16] *The Winter's Tale,* V. iii. 115 ff. [17] *Ibid.,* V. ii. 118.
[18] *Ibid.,* V. ii. 50 ff. See also the Third Gentleman's account of the effects on Paulina and on the princess (V. ii. 79 ff.).
[19] *Ibid.,* V. iii. 128.
[20] In the "Life of Caesar," and again in the "Life of Antony."

chase" that was a usual feature of the feast Lupercalia; but they hear the shouts of the people, and Brutus suggests that he fears the people are choosing Caesar for their king. Like Brutus and Cassius, we have not witnessed the demonstration but have naturally supposed that the shouts we have heard are "applauses . . . for some new honours that are heap'd on Caesar." "Gentle" Casca has seen it all, and Brutus now asks him to "tell us the manner of it."

> I can as well be hang'd as tell the manner of it. It was mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown—yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets—and, as I told you, he put it by once; but, for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by; and still as he refus'd it, the rabblement hooted and clapp'd their chopp'd hands and threw up their sweaty night-caps and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refus'd the crown, that it had almost chok'd Caesar, for he swounded and fell down at it. . . .
>
> Marry, before he fell down, when he perceiv'd the common herd was glad he refus'd the crown, he pluck'd me ope his doublet and offer'd them his throat to cut. . . . And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, if he had done or said anything amiss, he desir'd their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried, "Alas, good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of them; if Caesar had stabb'd their mothers, thy would have done no less.[21]

Obviously this use of narrative is economical of playing-time and stage-work, but the greatest gain is in dramatic emphasis, for the disgruntled Casca, besides informing us what it was that caused those shouts, relates the whole incident in vigorous language that is symptomatic of the disgust felt by himself and many other Romans for this epileptic who threatens to become an arrogant despot. Caesar's ostentatious rejection of the proffered crown could easily have been shown on stage, though not without extending the acting-time of the play; but what matters more at this point in the story is the effect of Caesar's histrionics upon Casca, and particularly the impact of Casca's scornful description upon the other two persons who are to take the lead in bringing about Caesar's downfall. The exhibition of the action itself could not have accomplished as much as Casca's report does; in other words, the relation is more *dramatic*.

A similar claim is convincingly substantiated in Ophelia's account of a very distressing interview with Hamlet near the beginning of Act II of Shakespeare's greatest play. For reasons which the "affrighted" girl cannot understand, the normally well-behaved prince has appeared before her

[21] *Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 235 ff.

> with his doublet all unbrac'd,
> No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
> Ungart'red, and down-gyved to his ankle,
> Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
> And with a look so piteous in purport
> As if he had been loosed out of hell
> To speak of horrors. . . .[22]

Here and in the remainder of the report the audience learns what enactment of the interview could not have shown so well—the disturbing effect which the experience has had upon Ophelia. Without this report, incidentally, Polonius would not have entered upon his campaign to prove (and he died in the attempt) that this was "the very ecstasy of love." Moreover, had we in the audience seen Hamlet in such curious disarray, had we witnessed his peculiar gestures in this wordless encounter, we should have been either greatly puzzled or greatly amused. Ophelia's vivid account does not amuse us, for her distress is obvious; and we are not puzzled, for our minds are too well filled with details of Hamlet's strange appearance and stranger conduct—details which we might very well have missed or misunderstood if we had trusted our own eyes. Shakespeare does not stop with filling the mind's eye; he helps the mind to interpret what it sees there.

Equally telling in its effect is that tremendous second scene in Act II of *Macbeth,* a scene which has even greater dramatic intensity than the moment of Macbeth's ultimate defeat and death. Lady Macbeth, it will be remembered, has finally prevailed on her reluctant husband to murder King Duncan in his sleep; and now, as the scene opens and "he is about it," she waits for his return from the ghastly business. How real, how near, and how horrible it seems. Yet the whole thing is done with words—and the shriek of an owl. Except for the sight of the white-faced, terribly shaken murderer himself, with the "filthy witness" of his blood-stained hands, we see with "trusted eyes" no single detail of the foul act. And yet, because it is so skilfully prepared for and because the deed itself is so vividly reflected, as it were, in the talk of Macbeth and his wife, the scene is extraordinarily powerful. The audience could have been no more shocked by the sight of the dagger-thrust itself, which, besides being less convincing as stage business, would have failed to give due emphasis to what is really the essence of the whole play—the effect which the deed has had upon Macbeth. His inward bleakness impresses us deeply as he tells exactly what has happened to intensify his frantic horror:

> There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
> That they did wake each other. I stood and heard them;
> But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
> Again to sleep. . . .

[22] *Hamlet,* II. i. 78 ff.

> One cried, "God bless us!" and "Amen" the other,
> As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
> List'ning their fear, I could not say "Amen,"
> When they did say, "God bless us!"[23]

To omit this passage would be to devitalize a scene which, as it stands, is unforgettable.

If the passages of description and narration which I have quoted make easy reading and constitute the most pleasing parts of this paper, here isolated from their dramatic context, it must be recognized none the less that it is quite improper so to isolate them; each is a part of a carefully designed and integrated dramatic piece and should be studied *in situ*. It must be remembered, furthermore, that without exception these quoted words were intended to impress the mind through audible tone, accompanied by certain "concomitants" (as Dr. Johnson called them), namely, such gestures, costumes, and stage properties as the Elizabethan public playhouse afforded. In his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" John Keats observed that

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter;

a statement which a student once translated to mean, "It's nice to listen to music, but it's nicer not to." Can it be the object of this paper to prove that it's nice to see actions on the stage, but it's nicer not to? That, of course, would be sheer nonsense. If there is any correlation between the quality of a play and the amount of narrative and descriptive matter in it, the most one can say is that blocks of static description and second-hand report are more likely to make a play dull than to improve it. At its worst the device is insufferable; some of the most tedious pieces in all dramatic literature are plays in which "relations" are used extensively. Yet as I have tried to show above, a vivid report of moderate length may create an atmosphere, reveal the mood of a multitude, focus attention on the significant element in a scene of confusion or violence, and above all it may achieve direct and convincing emotional effects as it—the very telling itself—shows the disgust of Caesar's enemies, the anxiety of Ophelia, the anguish of Macbeth. When, therefore, it appears that Shakespeare deliberately chose to use words in place of action at certain important moments of his best plays, and when, furthermore, it is clear that he did so with notable gain in dramatic effect, it surely will not do to thrust aside these passages of brilliant description and superb narration as evidence only of his carelessness or of the inadequacy of Elizabethan stage equipment. On the contrary, they show how magnificently Shakespeare could make full use of the greatest stage of all, the unrestricted arena of the play-goer's imagination.

[23] *Macbeth*, II. ii. 23 ff.

GEORGE ODGER (1820-1877)
A FOUNDER OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT

W. H. G. Armytage

BY far the ablest mid-century Labour politician." So one of the latest historians of the nineteenth century sums up the personality and activities of George Odger.[1] The Webbs held a similar view. "An orator of remarkable power, he swayed popular meetings at his will, and was the idol of Metropolitan Radicalism. But he was no mere demagogue. Beneath his brilliant rhetoric and emotional fervour there lay a large measure of political shrewdness. . . ."[2] Even Odger's more acute contemporaries, who were not blinded by the storm of prejudice that any radical was bound to arouse, recognized his intrinsic worth. Matthew Arnold, for instance, who found little to praise in the England of his day could write of George Odger without malice that he "represents the beautiful and virtuous mean of our present working class," and he contrasts him with the noisy Bradlaugh, a typical member of what he called "the populace."[3]

A recent perusal of the letters of George Odger that are at present in the Bishopsgate Institute, London, coupled with certain contemporary developments both in England and in Europe, suggests that a rather more modern survey of his outlook and achievements than is presented by the *Dictionary of National Biography* would not be inopportune. For the effects of his work lie all around us, and, indeed, one hare which he started has developed into a rather formidable dragon threatening international associations. Perhaps it may help to clarify our outlook if we look at the career of George Odger in perspective.

Like many thrustful Britons, he was born in the West country, the son of a Cornish miner.[4] He was brought up to use the awl, as a shoemaker and cordwainer, and, like most adventurous youths, travelled about England for a while till, by 1849, we find him, at the age of 29, beginning to settle down. When the inevitable technological change overtook the industry, causing men to murmur at the innovation, he repudiated those guilty of the cowardly practice of "rattening," that is, of compelling a man to join a union by hiding or stealing his tools. He became a member of a trade society of shoemakers; they took a strange and charming way to describe their society,

[1] R. C. K. Ensor, *England: 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1936), 132, n. 5.
[2] S. and B. Webb, *A History of Trade Unionism, 1660-1920* (London, 1920), 237-8.
[3] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1935), 90.
[4] Boase, *Collecteana Cornubiensa* (1890), 633, gives 1813 as the date of his birth. The *Beehive*, in a short note written while Odger was alive, gives 1820, as does the *D.N.B.* But we have it from one who knew him that "he always looked older than he really was." (W. J. Davis, *Recollections*, 64.) A portrait of Odger at this time shows him as bald, stoutish, clean-shaven, with side whiskers, the inevitable Victorian pendants to gentility.

"enrolled under the banner of St. Crispin." Like many other West countrymen in the last century, Odger was drawn to London, following the path of Southwood Smith, William Lovett, and George Howell, who had all found their *métier* in metropolitan radicalism. It was with the last of these men that his life was to be closely affiliated.

For he succeeded George Howell as secretary of the newly formed London Trades Council,[5] and remained in that office for ten years (1862-72). During this time he made history. More than anyone else, he helped the associations of artisans to take their place as recognized pressure groups within the legal structure of the state. Two instances of the pressure he himself applied illustrate this theme.

The first concerns the visit of Garibaldi to England. It was made the occasion of such popular enthusiasm that the government spirited Garibaldi away, and provoked a storm of protest by so doing. Indeed, at the London protest meeting at Primrose Hill, police were called out to disperse the gathering.[6] This event, occurring on the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birthday, led to a general demand that the working artisan be given the right to vote.[7] Odger was quick to seize advantage of this popular ferment, and led a deputation to Gladstone pointing out the injustice of the working man being deprived of the franchise, and at the same time, pointing out his fitness for it. Gladstone was moved. On May 11 in the same year (1864), he made the declaration which made him the undisputed leader of the Liberal party for the rest of his life. Though well known, it bears repetition: "Every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution."[8]

The second example of his activity and its momentous consequences occurred later in the same year. This also arose out of a demonstration, this time to sympathize with the Northern States in their struggle with the South in the American Civil War. Similar meetings had been held to commiserate with the poor and oppressed of Poland and Italy, and it occurred to Odger and his associates that an international conference of working men and a public expression of sympathy with the North would be most helpful. Also imbued with this confident messianic impulse was the German refugee Karl Marx, fresh from his researches among the blue books in the British Museum

[5]Formed as a strike committee *c.* 1860, it met at the Old Bell Inn, Newgate, under George Potter. It shows the beginnings of an informal trade union cabinet.

[6]On April 23 and May 7, 1864. For Odger's part in the activity surrounding the visit of Garibaldi see Carl F. Brand in the *American Historical Review,* XXX (1925), 251-70.

[7]See *London Telegraph,* April 24, 1864, commenting on the fact that both Garibaldi and Shakespeare were from the working classes: "How then if this same working class were *worked.* If this mine which turns out nuggets of itself had shafts of good legislation, galleries of fair franchise, and claims of free and full education driven into it, what might not be expected?"

[8]J. Morley, *Life of Gladstone* (London, 1903), II, 127. "One of the fated words had been spoken," Morley comments, "that gather up wandering forces of time and occasion, and precipitate new eras."

Library. Marx, who wrote an address for the occasion, has left it on record that Odger organized the meeting.[9] It assembled in St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, under the presidency of a professor of history, on September 28, 1864.[10] At this meeting the Working Men's International Association was formed, with a general council in London which was to act as a "medium of co-operation" between workers' societies in Germany, Italy, France, and England. Needless to say, Odger was a member of this council, and, six years later, he became its president.

Such confident, messianic enthusiasm could only have been possible if reform agitation in England itself was in full swing. And it was. One after another the mushroom societies sprang up under Odger's influence, and when they declined, others grew in their place. The protean nature of working-class organizations at this time becomes coherent only if one follows the guiding thread of his ceaseless activity weaving through them all. We know that as early as January 9, 1862, he had broached the subject of political action to the trades councils (themselves the products of the great strikes of 1859).[11] The first of these political working-men's clubs that Odger evolved was aptly enough called into existence in a Bloomsbury public house on October 28 of the same year. By December, 1863, it had become the Universal League for the Material Elevation of the Industrious Classes, aiming at the improvement of labour, education, and means of recreation for the masses. But Odger saw that political activity was also necessary, and threw himself into securing the election of known sympathizers to the House of Commons. This was the kind of work in which he excelled, since it gave him scope to speak. It led to the London Trades Council adopting political action, and throwing its disciplined weight on the side of suitable candidates for the House of Commons.[12]

For discipline was the hall-mark of the trade unionists in the sixties. Odger, and even more Applegarth, were determined that sectionalism and rough public-house accounting were to be replaced by centralization and well-organized benefit balances. The incarnation of the evils they wished to abolish was George Potter, and to Odger fell the task of attacking Potter at a meeting of the trades, and, in September, 1865, securing his expulsion from the London Trades Council.[13] With this discipline, political activity

[9]He told Engels so at the time. (Karl Marx, *Selected Works* (London, 1942), II, 603.) He described the meeting as "packed to suffocation." It is interesting to note that Major Wolff (Thurn-Taxis), Garibaldi's adjutant, was present. Marx failed to attend the council, the first time because he was ill, the second time because he was late.

[10]M. Beer, *A History of British Socialism* (London, 1920), II, 213. The professor was the positivist E. S. Beesly, later to write extensively for the *Beehive*.

[11]*Quarterly Review*, CXIX, 545-6.

[12]W. A. S. Hewins attributes this to Odger's "inducement." (*D.N.B.*, XLI, 421.)

[13]"Pub-crawling was contemptuously said to be the basis of Potter's strength—it was." (R. W. Postgate, *The Builders' History* (London, 1923), 196.) Potter was expelled for trying to support a strike of Staffordshire puddlers with which Odger and Applegarth did not agree. (*Ibid.*, 217.)

was possible, and it is significant that Odger was the leading spirit behind the candidature of Thomas Hughes for the unwieldy and unmanageable constituency of Lambeth.[14] The experience gained in the Hughes committee room at the "Rifle Tavern" in Kennington Park Road, coupled with the success of Thomas Hughes himself, made Odger branch out in other directions and establish yet more influential contacts.

The first new activity was, of course, a newspaper. The *Beehive,* founded in 1861 for all labour, was under the editorship and control of George Potter. So Odger proposed the resuscitation of a paper called first the *Workman's Advocate* and later the *Commonwealth.* He also held a meeting to consider "the best means to be adopted to increase the circulation of the paper and to provide for its maintenance during a sufficient period to secure its success." He became the chairman of the "Industrial Newspaper Company Limited" and even had a publisher. But the newspaper lasted for less than two years (1865-7); the salacious spice which Potter managed to introduce into the columns of the *Beehive* made it impossible for any newcomer to challenge it in the labour world. The second activity was the formation of groups to exert pressure on the government to obtain legal recognition for the unions. One was the "Universal League for the Welfare of the Working Class" which secured an interview with the President of the Board of Trade on the anomalies of the existing Master and Servant Act.[15]

An even more important group was growing into national proportions. This was the "Manhood Suffrage and Vote by Ballot Association" which had been formed by Odger and Applegarth in 1862, Odger being chairman.[16] This was particularly enterprising since three years earlier both Lord John Russell and John Bright had failed in their attempts at parliamentary reform. The inaugural meeting of the body was held in the Freemasons' Tavern, and after several attempts had been made to get the leaders to modify "manhood" into "household" suffrage, the organization was merged, two years later, into the wider Reform League. This body, under the presidency of Edmond Beales, together with a council and an executive, set up headquarters at 8 Adelphi Terrace, and, with the help of the Radical members of the House of Commons, succeeded in securing the passage of the Reform Bill of 1868. It dissolved a year later.

As the reform agitation gathered momentum, Odger turned more and

[14]Odger to George Howell, June 28, 1865, asking him to come to a meeting of Hughes' committee. Hughes was later to repay the unions for this support (for he was elected) by championing their cause in the House of Commons. (Howell Collection, Bishopsgate Institute, London.)

[15]George Howell, *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders* (London, 1902), 151-2. This book, naturally, gives great prominence to the efforts of Howell himself, and to a less degree to Applegarth, who was alive when it was written. Odger, of course, had been dead for twenty-four years.

[16]R. Humphrey, *Life of Robert Applegarth* (London, 1913), 57-9. Applegarth himself repeatedly acknowledges Odger's "power of declaiming in impassioned periods"; e.g., p. 18.

more towards building up the solid front of respectability that was, according to the "junta," to be the salvation of the trade union movement. Karl Marx noticed this, and complained bitterly in a letter to Engels about "the jealous Odger," coupling him with Proudhon and Mazzini, and declaring that at the next meeting of the International, "I will personally deal these fools of Proudhonists the finishing blow."[17] The Sheffield Outrages, at first regarded by the London unionists as revivals of old charges and trumped-up fabrications on the part of the enemies of the movement, claimed national attention. On October 15, 1866, agents of the Saw Grinders' Union blew up the house of a non-unionist with gunpowder. The Sheffield Masters offered a reward of £1,000, and the government supplemented it with another £100, for anyone who could give information about the instigators of the crime. So serious did matters become that the government appointed a commission the following year to take evidence upon oath respecting the outrages.[18] Odger was meanwhile sent down by the London Trades Council to make a confidential report, and he confirmed their worst fears. It was now that Odger's activity on behalf of Hughes bore fruit, for Hughes was appointed to the commission for the especial purpose of looking after the interests of labour. Powerful allies now rallied to the cause of the unions; and A. J. Mundella, addressing the Social Science Congress assembled at Birmingham in 1868, on the necessity of arbitration between capital and labour, declared in a eulogy of the unions that Odger was "one of the most intelligent Trade Unionists of the country."[19] Howell and Applegarth seem to veer at this time towards Liberal Radicalism, while Odger seems to be turning towards something like republicanism, yet dissociated from the extravagances of foreign movements.

In the years 1868-9 there are two letters showing irritation at Howell. The first, written from Northampton, expresses the "annoyance" of the local branch of the Trades Council at not receiving a decision about a meeting which Charles Bradlaugh (the prospective parliamentary candidate) was to hold there. Odger went on: "Send the resolution the moment you read this. Address it to Mr. York. Write *immediately,* it is important." Then after the signature comes this postscript, heavily underlined: "Do write." The second letter, written a year later, hints at some disagreement: "After leaving you on Monday night Mr. Latham and Mr. Hole overtook me when on my way home and they assured me you had no meaning in what you said beyond to convey the idea that I had made a political mistake. Accepting

[17] *Selected Works,* II, 614.

[18] On November 17, 1866, the London Trades Council waited upon the Home Secretary just over a fortnight after the Sheffield Town Council had waited upon him. Both desired an inquiry. But whereas the Sheffield deputation wanted the inquiry to be specific and limited in terms of reference to the cause of the explosion, the London Trades Council asked for a full and searching inquiry into the whole subject. At that time the press was almost hysterically anti-unionist. (Howell, *Labour Legislation,* 159-63.)

[19] *Proceedings of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1868), 526. He quoted Odger's diatribes against strikes with approval.

these gentlemen's explanation of the matter, I feel it my duty to frankly withdraw all that I said offensive to you."[20]

It is very tempting to read into this letter Odger's subsequent activities with the Labour Representation League, the first organization formed for the purpose of carrying on a national campaign for the return of working men.[21] It was inaugurated at the Sussex Hotel, Bouverie Street, in the summer of 1869 as a result of the agitation of the London Working Men's Association during the election in 1868—the first time that the town artisan had used his vote. Its programme was more ambitious than the mere return of working men, however, for it not only hoped to watch the progress and promotion of parliamentary bills, but also to collect from parliamentary papers such useful information as would aid the working classes.[22] In this way "a well arranged and constantly acting economical machinery" would be set in motion to safeguard labour interests.

Of course, Odger became the first parliamentary candidate, and actually went to the polls four times from June, 1869 to February, 1871. His results, though failures, merit attention, for they show how respectable his candidature became and how free from the "freak" vote that generally accompanies an election where one candidate is tacitly understood as being a character in a charade. The results were:

June, 1869 (Stafford)	Evans	519
	Whitworth	720
	Jenkins	182
	Odger	375
February, 1870 (Southwark)	Beresford	4,686
	Odger	4,382
	Waterlow	2,966
March, 1870 (Bristol)	Robinson	4,558
	Hodgson	2,761
	Odger	1,301
February, 1871 (Southwark)	Beresford	5,716
	Odger	3,496

As one may see, his result at Southwark in 1870 was a portent for the Liberal

[20]Howell correspondence, August 3, 1868, and August 6, 1869.

[21]John Stuart Mill hoped that the Reform League would promote this end and looked forward to "advanced Liberals of all shades" receiving support. (Howell correspondence, July 22, 1867; to E. Beales.) Three years later Mill wrote to Henry Kilgour: "The Parliamentary tone does not seem to me to be at present so elevated as to be in any danger of being lowered by the admission of such men as Mr. Odger into a house the majority of whom seem to me to be abundantly endowed with all the characteristics you ascribe to him, except the 'considerable mental vigour' for which you give him credit." (Quoted by R. A. Humphrey, *A History of Labour Representation*, 191.) Mill naturally influenced a number of those who were drawn by his reputation in other fields.

[22]This looks suspiciously like the origin of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, formed two years later. The idea of information from parliamentary papers, predigested for working-class consumption, was to flower in the labour departments. (Massachusetts 1870, England 1886. In England, let it be noted, the President of the Board of Trade who set it up was A. J. Mundella.)

party, for though they put forward a candidate, he obtained less votes than Odger, and the Tory was successful. John Stuart Mill wrote to him pointing this out after his second contest there.[23]

Perhaps these reverses turned Odger into a more adamant radical than before, or perhaps the exhortations of Mill at home, and Goldwin Smith across the water, had their effect on him. Whatever the reason, 1872 saw him in a much more intransigent mood than before. On September 19, 1870, he and J. G. Eccarius had spoken to a large crowd in Hyde Park. In the same year Odger was president of the general council of the International. Like Goldwin Smith, he was excited at the establishment of the French Republic, and looked, perhaps hopefully, to a rout of the Liberal party in this country, which he was beginning to consider the real obstacle to all reform. It was in this spirit that he joined the Land Tenure Reform Association. He began to write. *Rhymes for the People, or Paul Copse the Poacher* (published at the Office of St. Crispin for a penny), was followed by weightier articles in the *Contemporary Review* for 1871 on "Working Men in Parliament."[24] By 1872 his theme was republicanism. Two pamphlets on current events were published: *Republicanism v. Monarchy* (16 pp.) and *The Crimes of English Monarchy*.[25] A typical incident in the tumult that he provoked among working-class politicians in this year may be seen in his visit to Sheffield on June 19, 1872. He was supposed to talk on "Capital and Labour and Trade Unions." The Cutlers' Company refused to lend their hall, and the Temperance Committee likewise refused to lend theirs, adding with unconscious humour that it was "reserved for the use of speakers promoting the cause of temperance." Odger was exceedingly hoarse and his voice could not be heard beyond the platform of the open-air meeting ground in Paradise Square. He nevertheless found voice enough to denounce the "exclusive and un-English conduct" of the Master Cutler and the committee of the Temperance Hall, and then proceeded to his republican argument. But the most important part of his argument is not the republicanism of it, but his repudiation of the Liberal party and his open adoption of the Conservative party. He declared, "every man who serves on an institution in this land is a Conservative," and denied that it

[23]". . . it proves that you have the majority of the Liberal party with you, and that you have called out an increased amount of political feeling in the borough. It is plain that the Whigs intend to monopolize political power as long as they can without coalescing in any degree with the Radicals. The working men are quite right in allowing Tories to get into the House to defeat this exclusive feeling of the Whigs. . . ." (Quoted *Beehive,* February 13, 1875, and S. and B. Webb, *A History of Trade Unionism,* 288.) Even a Radical minister, W. E. Forster, remarked: "Years ago I hoped the time would come when we could count among our members, alongside the merchant and manufacturer, the working man and the artisan. I should delight to see Mr. Odger and some other Mr. Odgers in the next Parliament." (S. Maccoby, *English Radicalism* (London, 1938), II, 149.)

[24]*Contemporary Review,* XVI, 102-23; XVIII, 23-42.

[25]Sir Charles Dilke and Auberon Herbert threw the House of Commons into an uproar, the members standing on their benches and catcalling the two offenders, when they moved for certain returns relating to the civil list. Hansard found it impossible to report their speeches. Good accounts exist in S. Hutchinson Harris, *Life of Auberon Herbert* (1943), 133 ff.

meant that a man should govern because he was the son of his father. "I love my country, and have made England's honour the guiding star of my existence, but I go for republicanism because I know that England cannot afford to keep this luxuriant aristocracy drawing the fat of the land away from the people without giving anything in return. In this land we have a class calling themselves Lords, and a gilded chamber calling itself the House of Lords. It is really the House of Landlords."[26] The meeting swelled from very small numbers till Paradise Square was filled. It ended with three cheers for Sir Charles Dilke and the Republican party. It is little wonder that Gladstone and the Liberals felt that concession to the demands of the Trade Union Congress for a right to picket, would indeed be fraught with consequences.[27]

It is in these first trade union conferences that the movement found its real line of development, and, ultimately, its real source of strength. In the history of the congresses, the "three Georges," Odger, Howell, and Potter, played a leading part. For the second congress (held at London in 1871) Odger was the secretary, succeeding Potter, who had also recently been deposed from the editorial control of the *Beehive*. The congress was summoned at such short notice that the Birmingham Trades Council found it impossible to send representatives. Odger replied that it was a question of political expediency: he had to wait for the second reading of the bill to legalize the trade unions as accounting bodies with a right to discipline their members. It was one of those moments in the history of an institution which used to be described as a "watershed." For from that time onwards, the T.U.C. became the forge in which Labour policy was shaped. The industrious student can find in the records of the succeeding congresses (1872, Nottingham; 1873, Leeds; 1874, Sheffield; 1875, Liverpool and Glasgow; and 1876, Newcastle) abundant evidence of his activity. But he lost the enthusiasm he had possessed in the earlier half of the decade, for in 1875 he refused to stand for the secretaryship of the parliamentary committee, on which he had served since its inception. He died two years later, and at his funeral was an imposing group of contemporaries: Sir Charles Dilke, Frederic Harrison, E. S. Beesly, Henry Fawcett, and prominent trade unionists. Beesly, who had taken the chair at the first meeting of the International, spoke a funeral oration, declaring "he was not only a good, but a great citizen, one who put his public duties as his first work." It is to be hoped that one day he will find a biographer.[28]

[26]Extensive report in the *Sheffield Independent* of the following day, which declares he came at the request of one W. Garbutt, President of the Sheffield Republican Club.

[27]In 1872 the editor of *Figaro* attacked Odger with some vehemence, accusing him of treason because of his republican speeches. Odger sued the editor (Mortimer) for libel. The prosecution was unsuccessful since no inconvenience to Odger had resulted from the accusation. (*Odger v. Mortimer, Law Reports,* VIII, 368.) It illustrates the state into which feeling had precipitated Odger at this time.

[28]No biography exists in the British Museum, though a short sixteen-page memoir was listed in the old catalogue. The obituary notices in *The Times* form the only reliable guide: March 5, 1877, 6, col. 3; March 12, 9, col. 6; and January 20, 1883, 7. References to him are scattered through the biographies of his contemporaries.

LITERATURE AND THE MARXIST AESTHETIC

CHARLES I. GLICKSBERG

IN his preoccupation with the ultimate goal of social integration, the Communist critic emphasizes one pole of the personality to the exclusion of other aspects and potentialities, for he assumes that when social integration, according to his formula, is achieved the health and happiness of the individual and the flowering of culture will be automatically assured. For him the individual is but a function of economic society, a cell in the corporate blood stream. But if the individual has many roots of his complex being in society, there is also a part of him, an important part, that has no connection with the immediate pressures of his culture. He is lonely and apart, feeling within him the stirrings of energy and striving that he cannot account for, the emergence of mysteries he cannot hope to solve, the perception of cosmic enigmas which baffle the mobilized intelligence of science. He is both mystic and metaphysician, a dweller in the unconscious, a dreamer as well as a worker, a seeker after an unknown, perhaps ultimately unknowable God.

And his life in the dark labyrinths of the unconscious fascinates him, for it challenges the alleged supremacy of the rational and mechanical. The writer, as writer, enjoys nothing more than posing contradiction against contradiction and attempting to resolve them in a "higher" synthesis, which in turn will generate further contradictions. Cradled in the inscrutable, suckled on mysteries which cannot be put into words, however subtle and evocative, he is no confident dogmatist, no crusading propagandist. There is more between heaven and earth and in the unfathomable soul than the authors of the *Communist Manifesto* were aware of. The artist is himself a bundle of contradictions. He studies Freud and in part follows his counsel to look within, for like Coleridge he knows that he cannot hope from outward forms to gain the vision and the faith that must come from within. And he knows this first, because he is tremendously interested in the life of dreams, the ambivalence of the unconscious, the conflicting desires that torment him, the symbols that arise out of the murky, turbulent depths; and second, because he is determined that no aspect of life shall escape his relentless scrutiny.

Hence the persistence with which Communist critics attack what they call the middle-class ideology of Freudianism. But Freudianism cannot be thrust out of the way by simply invoking class co-ordinates—unless the Marxists are to argue that since everything is social the contents of the unconscious are also social in character, or unless they are to argue that these contents are the product of theosophy, not science. This will never do, how-

ever, for while the instinctual energy whose tortuous course Freud tracked down to its source may be modified by social influences, its fundamental desire for gratification remains unaltered. There is the world of sex, the lunar cycle, the rhythm of the menstrual period, dream and myth, neuroses and creative hunger, symbol and memory, consciousness and the oceanic tides of the unconscious.

And there is, too, at all times, the mysterious cosmos without and the problem of man's relation to it. Man who dwells on this earth for but an ephemeral span—what does he make of it all? What God shall he acknowledge and how shall he worship Him? What shall he make of death that daily threatens his extinction and that has undone billions upon billions before him? Hence his feeling of loneliness and his star-crossed metaphysical pilgrimage, his sorrowful journey to the end of night: a journey, a pilgrimage, which leads him not only to the flaming abysses of the inferno but also to Pisgah-heights of vision. Joyce was profoundly influenced by Freud and Jung; Franz Kafka had read both Freud and Kierkegaard. Are they to be condemned as decadents simply because they do not conform to the Marxist *Weltanschauung?* On the contrary, such writers, precisely because they are free from ideological bias, the distorting simplifications introduced by dialectial materialism, see more deeply and more truly into the tragic heart of things. Neither decadents nor propagandists, they are the profound seers of the world of art, the clairvoyants of the inner life of man, bearing the burden of the unintelligible mystery. They tell all that they know and see and feel, no matter how revolting these disclosures seem to our egocentric pride: the contradictions, the irrationality, the hatred, the madness, the evil, the unspeakable horror, as well as the grandeur and the beauty, the laughter and goodness and ecstasy.

Nor need such piercing insights incapacitate the writer from sympathizing intensely with the plight of the poor and the suffering of society. After all, he is not the one who grinds the faces of the poor; he is not on the side of the vicious forces of greed and evil. By telling the truth with all the resources of art at his command, he becomes, in Shelley's phrase, the unacknowledged legislator of the world. If, nevertheless, he belongs to no party and advocates no political system, it is because he realizes all too clearly that life, under the best of régimes, is bound to be difficult and dangerous, painful, fraught with tragedy, since in the end all flesh must turn to dust. He does not write proletarian or democratic or fascist poetry but poetry that is universal in scope and significance, work that transcends the time-bound categories of politics and the shibboleths of class consciousness.

Intellectual beliefs are not the generators of value in poetry. Take the great writers of the past, how many of them have believed in the most amazing medley of ideas! What a cross-section of human folly, fanaticism, idealism, realism, classicism, collectivism, worship of Nature, humanism, paganism, primitivism, despair and ecstasy, blank pessimism, and frenzied

faith in some golden age! This very diversity of aspiration and feeling testifies to the profound humanity of the artist, his intransigent individuality. The Marxists who would arbitrarily relate the writer to the socio-economic conditions of his age and transform him into a mouthpiece of revolutionary doctrine, have caught hold of only a partial and therefore misleading truth. For while the mind of the writer is unquestionably moulded by the conflicts of his time, such "conditioning" fails to explain his originality and uniqueness as an artist, the particular element of universality he shadows forth. It also fails to account for the fact that writers born in the same period react differently, strikingly so, to the culture of their age. For that matter the writer is subjected to a streaming multiplicity of influences: climatic, glandular, scientific, religious, ideological, technological, environmental, as well as narrowly economic. And none of these influences alone is sufficient to account for the miracle that is art. One poet, a Gerard Manley Hopkins, found creative sustenance in the mystery of Godhood pervading all things and wrote with impassioned sensuousness about his mystical visions at a time when the Darwinian revolution was shaking the foundations of Victorian England. George Bernard Shaw became a socialist and a creative evolutionist. William Butler Yeats was attracted by alchemy and theosophy. E. E. Cummings, in the next generation, takes refuge in the privacy of the soul and celebrates the aliveness of individual being. Robinson Jeffers preaches a cosmic pessimism. T. S. Eliot becomes an Anglo-Catholic. W. H. Auden leaves Freudianism and Marxism behind him and turns to Kierkegaardian existentialism for a new source of faith.

One of the most unscrupulous bids for power in the intellectual realm is represented by the Communist attempt to set up a four-square system of aesthetics on the economic foundations established by Marxism. It is a crudely abstract and naïvely reasoned, but fanatically dogmatic, system of categorical imperatives. The writings of the founders of Communism have as much bearing on aesthetics as Esperanto and Newton's laws of motion. Take a volume like *Literature and Art,* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, just published, which consists of excerpts relating to literature and art drawn from the work of these two worthies. Where Marx comments intelligently and discerningly on literature—novels he has read—he is emphatically not a Marxist, except perhaps in his professional preference for works with a revolutionary content. When he ponderously endeavours to trace the influence of economic forces on literary ideology he is not a critic at all but a militant economist with a huge Teutonic axe to grind. It is really extraordinary that this sort of metaphysical abracadabra should be taken seriously as offering valid criteria for the concrete analysis and appraisal of works of art.

Page after page in *Literature and Art* gives us tedious arguments on how the economic structure of society forms the real foundation of the legal and political superstructure to which definite forms of social and aesthetic consciousness are supposed to correspond. This incredibly muddled psy-

chology of aesthetics is enough to drive one mad. To announce that social being determines consciousness is to say exactly nothing—certainly nothing capable of being applied to the creative process and the aesthetic response. This is the kind of aesthetic the Marxist literary critics would impose on us for our own salvation, an aesthetic based on the belief that an age and its art are best understood by an examination of the fundamental conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. How helpful is such a doctrine, such a method? What is the critic to do with the knowledge that ideologies and presumably aesthetic philosophies as well are only economic reflexes? How does all this apply to such works as *The Divine Comedy, Faust, Hamlet, The Brothers Karamazov, Moby Dick, Prometheus Unbound, Paradise Lost?* Confusion is worse confounded by the admission that ideological conceptions can in turn react upon the economic foundation and modify it, though this is never clearly and fully worked out. What the Marxist repeats again and again, as though by bedeviled obsession, is the thesis that all men, including writers and scientists, are conditioned by the economic forces of their age.

This is the stone which the Marxists would pass off on us as nourishing bread. It is perfectly comprehensible why numerous writers, after a short period of ideological infatuation, angrily revolted against this sterile nonsense. In one section of *Literature and Art* Marx concedes that some periods of highest artistic development stand in no direct causal relation to the general development of society, but the general relation of art as a whole to the general development of society is considered indisputable. But this is to state no more than a grand truism: namely that the writer is necessarily constrained to work with the materials and myths furnished by his age and cannot go beyond it. Greek mythology, for example, is not suited to the needs of a poet in a technological age. But in the total history of the complex development of art what does this amount to? The transformation of the poetic metaphor from primitive to scientific and technological times can also be viewed, as it is by Freud in *Totem and Taboo,* through the psychological perspective, without dragging in economic factors.

When it comes to the actual discussions of a novel, Engels is much more discriminating than Marx and makes many revealing remarks to the effect that however important *Tendenzromane* may be, the political views of the author should be hidden and implicit rather than overt. And he cites Balzac as a novelist who remorselessly dissects the decadence and corruption of France, without riding any particular ideological hobby-horse. That is why, declares Engels frankly, he has learned more from Balzac than from the professional historians and economists of the period. Engels demonstrates that, in literary criticism, he is not a docile Marxist: he reiterates the important point that it is not incumbent upon the author to furnish a clear-cut vision of the future social order or to take sides militantly. In short, the best refutation of the absurd excesses of Marxist criticism is to return to the original source and read what Marx and Engels actually wrote on aesthetics.

The Marxist disciples, however, keep on insisting that literature cannot be considered in and for itself, since to do so is to resurrect the ghost of art for art's sake. Literature, they aggressively maintain, stems from the social context and has social consequences. Yet it should be obvious by this time that such considerations throw no light on the central problem of literary evaluation. Though art has its roots in society, it cannot be appreciated or understood in strictly socio-economic terms, just as society cannot be adequately appraised in purely literary or aesthetic terms. Each discipline builds up its own method and criteria of judgment. The writer whose object is to suggest the intrinsic quality of experience, its sensuous immediacy and rich complexity, is neither for nor against, neither reactionary nor progressive. He goes beyond such abstractions to the refractory, incommunicable reality. He is never faced with two alternatives but with a host of possibilities. Conflict is his native element; the resolution of conflict the secret of his art. It is important to stress this aspect of the creative process, since the demand that the writer participate in the political struggles of his time is still strong. T. S. Eliot is right in his contention that poetry, whatever else it may strive to do, must have value primarily as poetry.

The stubborn paradox persists: T. S. Eliot and Gerard Manley Hopkins, regardless of their political orientation, produce noble poetry, whereas most of Mayakovsky's work is strident, party-bound propaganda. What the Marxist propagandists forget or cannot see is that only by virtue of its primary appeal as poetry, its profound imaginative impact, can poetry have moral, political, religious, economic, and other implications. Necessarily so, since it like fiction encompasses all of life; but the poetry, and not its sociological source or derivative, is the thing that counts supremely. This aesthetic criterion does not circumscribe the range of the poet's vision; he has the whole vast ocean of experience to disport in. Yet an English critic like Philip Henderson, in *The Poet and Society,* quaintly assumes that the truth is known: Marx has formulated it and anyone who resists the Marxist persuasion is, *ipso facto,* a downright reactionary. We are no longer satisfied, he pontifically asserts, "to evaluate a writer's work purely as a contribution to literature as such, but we find ourselves asking what attitude to society is implicit in his work—what, in fact, *his work means in practice*. For at the moment that consideration is more important to us than any other." Which is a frank confession that he like other Marxist critics in England and the United States, is willing to resort to argument by expediency, to run the risk of substituting political and economic dogmas for aesthetic standards, on the ground that the end justifies the means.

During the worst of the depression with its revolutionary impetus, "proletarian" poets tried to make the best of both worlds: the dying world of bourgeois culture with its sensibility and complexity, and the new, vital humanistic culture that the dictatorship of the proletariat was about to inaugurate. W. H. Auden, an extraordinarily fertile experimentalist using

rhythms in new and ingenious ways, introducing conversational interludes, jazz strains, free association, the irrationality of the unconscious, Freudian images and dream symbols—Auden tried to drive home the lesson that the middle class was about to be obliterated. *The Dance of Death,* a poetic drama wirtten in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, was Marxist through and through in its surrealist symbolism, even to the appearance of Karl Marx to announce the death of bourgeois society. But Auden, a genuine poet, was equally concerned about other aspects of life and his most distinctive contribution, now that it can be judged in the perspective of distance, was to portray in lively, frankly subjective verses, the acute dilemma of intellectuals caught between the fires of two worlds and yet striving desperately to retain their integrity. But if Auden did not compromise himself too far in his political commitments, other writers during the depression went the whole hog: joined the Party or else became vociferous fellow travellers. In *The Coming Struggle for Power,* John Strachey sounded the call to revolution and the demise of capitalism. In *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* he applied Marxist principles to modern literature. Edgell Rickword, editor of *Left Review,* zealously promulgated the doctrine that all art is propaganda. The most stalwart proponent of proletarian poetry was the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid.

Since he is a true poet, his poetry at its best is uninfected by the proletarian craze. He has brought back to poetry an earthy simplicity and poignant directness of statement, a lyric freshness and force that has well-nigh been strangled by the contemporary cult of ambiguity and clever allusiveness. There is, to be sure, no reason why a Communist cannot write powerful, moving poetry. It all depends on what relation exists between his political faith and his creative method. When he versifies Marxist dogma, he is not composing poetry. When he writes poetry, he is not paying tribute to Marxist doctrine. Hugh MacDiarmid is one of the few poets intensely sympathetic to the Communist cause who do not degenerate into "proletarian" poets. His poems on nature and love, on sky and sea and star, on the Scottish landscapes and the people he admires, have no trace of his political obsession. Even in his eulogistic "First Hymn to Lenin," there is no intrusion of dialectical argument. Lenin is hailed as the modern Christ, since he boldly accomplished what Christ failed to achieve. Now that Lenin has released the elemental force of justice, life may come into its own. As for the horrors perpetrated to complete the revolution, MacDiarmid echoes the convenient Communist rationalization: the end justifies the means.

> As necessary, and insignificant, as death
> Wi a' its agonies in the cosmos still
> The Cheka horrors are in their degree;
> And'll end suner! What maitteres't wha we kill
> To lessen that foulest murder that deprives
> Maist men o real lives!

In other words, these political murders are necessary and justified in the light of the goal striven for and finally achieved, the liberation of the human race. And MacDiarmid is perfectly sincere!

The Marxist aesthetic will not die; it crops up in the most unlikely places at the most unexpected times. In *Perspectives for Poetry* (1944), we have another propagandistic pamphlet, less vulgarly militant than some of the Marxist screeds in the past, yet it repeats the millenial faith in the masses, the belief that literature is inescapably propaganda, and the conviction that art is a function of society. Whatever conflicts are generated in the womb of capitalism inevitably find their expression in the work of the poets, who are an integral part of society. This method of correlating history and poetry, literature and social change, is regarded as an infallible touchstone. The critic who uses it can never go wrong.

To trace a step-by-step correspondence between social-historical conditions and poetic expression is foolish and inept. Too often the individual poet is judged in terms of his conformity to Marxist dogma, his treatment of individualism for example, his attitude toward the class conflicts of his day. If he is lyrical and introspective, he has not resolved his inner dualism; if he grapples with the crucial issues of his day then he is on the road to creative fulfilment, a poet of tremendous social significance, especially if his proposed solution is the dialectically correct one. What constitutes the unpardonable sin for the Marxist critic is seeming passivity in the face of the mounting crisis. Equally unforgivable, as in the case of Auden, is the neglect of "objective Reality" (whatever that may be) in favour of a preoccupation with Freudian neurotic symptoms. Stephen Spender is condemned for being too sensitively concerned with striking the personal note. C. Day Lewis remains too abstractly conceptual. It is hard to see what such formulations, or fulminations, have to do with literary criticism, how they help to illuminate the poetic problem or evaluate the specific quality of a poem or body of poetry. Led by Dylan Thomas and the Apocalypse, the poets have revolted against this political madness. The stress is now on organic awareness, the private vision, the revelations of the unconscious. Lawrence's phoenix is resurrected, and the contemporary poet now eagerly turns to religion and myth, the dream world and the fabulous unconscious for his source of inspiration and as a means of escaping the blight of the political emphasis.

Under pressure the Marxist critics have been forced to abandon the absurd theory that there is an invariant relationship between good art and correct political thinking. This is the fallacy that has vitiated Marxist aesthetics: the assumed rigid correspondence between politics and literature. There is no substitute for talent, for the patient mastery of technique; and talent and technique have nothing to do with questions of political orthodoxy. But whatever compromises the Marxist critic may be willing to make, inevitably, if he is orthodox in his views, he will come back to the relation

of the writer to the class conflict. That is the heart of the Marxist aesthetic, its distinguishing trade mark. Invariably, no matter what strategy the Marxist critic employs, he is convinced that the writer enlarges and vitalizes his creative potentialities by actively participating in the class struggle. What the Marxist propagandist forgets is that the poet is just as strongly opposed to Communist domination as to any other kind of "co-ordination" by the state. The writers who know what they are about are not fooled by these slogans about the class struggle and the classless society. The notion that dialectical materialism is in accord with the forward movement of life itself is so much mystical moonshine.

What is wrong with Marxist aesthetics is not the noun but the conditioning adjective, which tends to swallow the noun. The conjunction of the two is a contradiction in terms. Imperialist in its pretensions, Marxism endeavours to formulate a morphology of culture as well as a dynamic interpretation of politics and economics. Literature and art are needed as adjuncts to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is not to be wondered at that the aesthetics of dialectical materialism, when literally applied, culminate in arrant confusion. Plekhanov, in *Art and Society,* argues that the modern writer will not find inspiration *"in a sound idea if he seeks to defend the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the proletariat."* The crushing answer to such a pronouncement is that the creative writer does not think or work in terms of class categories, abstractions which he finds meaningless. His interest is in human beings and their concrete, living experiences. *The Novel and the People,* by Ralph Fox, declares that "the future of the English novel and therefore the solution to the problems which vex the English novelist lies precisely in Marxism with its artistic formula of a 'socialist realism' which shall unite and revitalize the forces of the Left in literature." Ralph Fox sees no reason why the writer cannot be a confirmed Marxist and an honest artist at one and the same time, but the statement that "without Marxism, there is no approach to the essential truth which is the chief concern of the writer," cuts the ground from under our feet and betrays the absolutism of the Marxist critic.

The absurdities and excesses of Marxist criticism are now apparent. Preoccupation with the importance of the class struggle grows into an all-devouring obsession; literature is transformed into a handmaiden of revolutionary propaganda. Revolutionary writers are expected to make their observations, intuitions, experiences, and beliefs fit within the dialectical framework. The poet puts on a pair of Marxist spectacles and beholds nothing but what he is expected to behold, even if this means a drastic impoverishment of reality. Thus all art is interpreted, as in Christopher Caudwell's *Illusion and Reality,* in terms of class alignments. But the revolt against this dictatorship in the arts has been steadily gaining momentum. Important as economic factors are, the contemporary writer refuses any longer to act on the assumption that economic revolution will establish the Kingdom of

Heaven on earth. Literature is undoubtedly influenced in some ways by the pressures of the age, but these affect only the outer shape or colouring a work takes. They have no bearing on the perennial motifs that literature sounds: hope, despair, love, the grandeur and insignificance of man, the incommunicable sense of loneliness, the precariousness of the human situation, the terror of the infinite, the metaphysical shudder at the approach of death. These are the timeless, universal elements of the great and enduring works of literature.

The age of radicalism in aesthetics is happily ended. The literary liberals are now a chastened, saner, if less exciting lot. They no longer measure literary values by the yardstick of political orthodoxy. They have discovered that art and human nature are far more complex than dialectical materialism made them out to be. They are disenchanted but free for other and more rewarding adventures of the spirit. Whatever new "religion" they espouse it will be with the liberating insight that Marxist categories are not applicable in the realm of literary values. And it is writers like Arthur Koestler who, by publicly confessing their past sins, help others to understand themselves and throw off the dead weight of an outlived and damaged allegiance. The Communist brethren may revile him as much as they please; they cannot detract from his essential sincerity and his indubitable talent. He is still groping for a synthesis; jettisoning the Marxist cargo has made him change his course, though he does not know as yet for which port to head. Freudianism now engrosses him, Freudianism and the scientific method, but he is convinced that the effort to establish a more humane order will no longer be achieved by a bloody class war. The revolution, if it is to be effected, must take place within the heart. It is man who must be transformed as well as his institutions. Dictatorships, whether of the right or the left, are abominations and must stand accursed in the eyes of all free men. The dangers of absolute power are as great in the hands of a commissar as in those of a fascist ruler. There is the crucial problem that Plato wrestled with, and that is the problem the literary mind confronts so earnestly today. Whether or not it can offer a solution, the most original creative work in fiction and poetry and drama is being done by those who have been untouched by the Marxist contagion or by those who, like Koestler and Orwell, have succeeded in freeing themselves from it and asserting their independence as artists.

A STUDY OF GOETHE*

CARL F. SCHREIBER

This is an ambitious book; the most provocative book on Goethe, I dare say, ever published in the English language. He who is well read in Goethe will find himself reweighing all the opinions he has held heretofore; and those to whom Goethe is but a name, may forget the mere name utterly and proceed to enjoy the skilful analysis of one of the greatest minds of modern times. To all intents and purposes this study is a biography stripped of all narrative. There is virtually nothing about Frankfurt, of its people and customs; the father, mother, and sister of the poet are barely mentioned; Friederike Brion, Lili Schoenemann, and Charlotte Buff are mere shadows. Only Charlotte von Stein stands out prominently, perhaps more than is her due. In short this is an "inner biography," as Fairley chooses to call it, "an account of what went on in his [Goethe's] mind in its progress from immaturity to maturity. It is this aspect of Goethe that now calls for attention."

But before we consider this aspect of the study something must be said about the form and the style of this unusual book. In the first place, it is completely free from the clutter of scholarship; there are no notes, or nearly none, at the bottom of the pages, nor are they to be found in a lumber-room at the back of the book. References in unscholarly dress, to be sure, are incorporated in the body of the text. The dates of the letters and the names of the recipients carry the reference within them. Unfortunately Fairley has paid token service to the practice of foot-notes. He has indulged himself in as many as nine which I trust will disappear with the next printing. On these nine occasions he has given in foot-notes the German for passages which he has translated or paraphrased for his English readers in a matchless manner. Are these vestigial remains? Throughout the study, except for these few instances, he has woven the German into the English in an amazingly effective manner. The eyes of those unacquainted with German will speedily learn to sort out this foreign matter and go unhampered on their way. The Goethe scholar, on the other hand, will find his delight in seeing the translation apposed to the original. I have examined the nine passages with care, and can find no good reason for their special treatment. It is no great matter, but oh! for a scholarly book clean in every respect.

Nor are exact references necessary for the few borrowings Fairley has made from Goethe biographers and scholars. By my count he mentions just seventeen, and most of these in passing: Simmel and Robertson, Bruford and Beutler among them. This is Fairley's own book and he makes no

*_A Study of Goethe_. By BARKER FAIRLEY. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press [Toronto: Oxford]. 1947. Pp. viii, 280. ($4.50)

bones about saying just that: "My indebtedness to those who have written on Goethe before me, though not great enough, is as great as I was able to make it. If I were to single out a particular debt, it would be to Hanna Fischer-Lamberg for her essay 'Charlotte von Stein, ein Bildungserlebnis Goethes.' "

The style has great charm, not only for its even flow, but also for its crystal-clear exposition. It attends to the need and the pleasure of laymen and scholar alike. The latter will be aroused by some statement, only to be quickly assuaged by Fairley's mastery of qualifying phrases of all sorts and kinds. I have selected a few from among the scores scattered throughout the book: "he ends by asking or all but asking"; "never or hardly ever at rest"; "the time he went to Weimar or thereabouts"; "the trouble, if we may call it that"; "Werther says or might have said," etc. I find in the study only two places where I should have preferred that Fairley had practised this art. "At no time in his life did he [Goethe] live in daily contact with children." This cannot be right, for his daily or almost daily visits to the Buff family with its abundance of children were extended over a considerable period of time. And did he not have a son of his own, who grew up under his eyes, perhaps all the more so because this family group was thrown back on itself by an unfortunate family arrangement? Of Goethe's relations with his three grandchildren who lived in his house, we know much more; but this was toward the end of his days and affected his writing little, if any. With the statement: "There are no real children in his books," I cannot agree. Willingly would I agree that there were few real children. But there are enough to show how well Goethe knew them. The children in *Werther* are portrayed from life with the greatest of skill. With what mastery is little Fitz drawn, that amazing young rascal, as unforgettable as Tiny Tim! And isn't Mignon a child, and problematic enough to suit even our advanced predilections?

This study, then, is the relation of a struggle, the struggle of a great mind to attain to balance and harmony. I doubt whether Fairley had any intention of making it dramatic, but it has turned out so to the great benefit of his venture. There are three acts properly and skilfully designed: Before Weimar, Before Italy, and Italy and After. The drama throws the three unities to the wind. The place is not often shifted, but the places are very different and far apart. Time embraces a long succession of years. Countless monologues are scattered throughout: they are spoken by the hero himself, words we have heard before, words taken from his own letters.

No one, to my knowledge, has put Goethe's letters to such skilful and scholarly use as Fairley has done in his study. The concentration on these epistles has produced an effect never achieved till now. I dare say all the passages have often been quoted, but not in the *Zusammenhang* before us.

The exposition, "Before Weimar," is so full of tension that one begins to wonder whether the hero can survive this fitful fever. Never was human being so changeful, now a chameleon, then a weather-vane, again a skiff on

a wind-swept lake. His mind was a cauldron or a swift-moving peep-show—have it as you will. Ideas raged in his head at a disconcertingly rapid and irregular tempo; they darted about and changed in a flash. His flitting, jerky habits of mind give the impression of a consuming unrest. "Waking or dreaming he was in a constant state of over-stimulation, a flux or welter of feeling the like of which has perhaps never been recorded." In all this he differs from his "Companions in Chaos" only by the greater degree of his inner violence. But strangely enough he survives, he does not burn himself out as do his Storm and Stress brethren, those animalcules, those literary titmice. Unfortunately none of those brave fellows had a father such as Goethe had, whose fetish was completeness, *Vollständigkeit*. Fairley speaks often and much of Goethe's great lack of discipline in his early years; but discipline was the very fibre of which he was made. His father had seen to that, as *Dichtung und Wahrheit* teaches so plainly.

Goethe's autobiography ends with the period before Weimar. For a moment, but only for a moment, or rather for a page or two, Fairley seems on the point of throwing out *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as an unreliable document. The evil thought darts through the mind that Fairley would discredit Goethe's own statements about his youth because they would not fit into the pattern he had so skilfully woven. But lo! the wheel comes full round. "In the last analysis," he says, "there is no discrepancy between the picture of Goethe's mind that we derive from *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and the picture we find in the early documents. . . . If we read carefully, everything leads to the same conclusion." And that is that! Goethe's autobiography was written for those who have the faculty of reading carefully, for as Fairley shrewdly remarks, everything "is said with such felicity that we are apt to take the felicity for happiness forgetting all that is behind."

Matthew Arnold certainly found this to be the case. In 1883 he made a lecture tour of this country and on one occasion delighted his Boston audience by reading from his poems, among them "The Scholar-Gipsy" containing the much-disputed passage beginning

> and amongst us One,
> Who most has suffer'd takes dejectedly
> His seat upon the intellectual throne:—
> And all his store of sad experience he
> Lays bare of wretched days. . . .

When Arnold was asked to whom he referred, he replied that he had written those lines just after he had read Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit,* and while he still felt the impression of its sadness.

As the action proceeds to the second phase, the ten years at Weimar before Italy, it becomes shrouded in mystery, a mystery which has confounded scholars and will continue to do so. So great was the influence of Charlotte von Stein on the hero that Fairley feels himself "compelled to use her name as a label for what was happening and call it 'Charlotte' for short." "The ten years of Charlotte, rightly understood, give us the measure

of his [Goethe's] crisis." This argument is based on the point that during a full decade Goethe kept his "nature-thought [science] and his poetry in separate compartments." This is very important for the crisis is bound to continue until Goethe succeeds in merging his love of science with his poetry. Science bulks large as the stabilizer, and not until Goethe is freed from the "Charlotte complex," shall we say, can the forces of exact truth come into full action. I can find no flaws in Fairley's workmanship; all is level and tight. No free flow from science to poetry can be detected in Goethe's writings of the time, except that his letters, especially to Charlotte, spill over into science and his science into his letters. These facts are as clear as can be, but I am still bothered about the *how* of these mysterious happenings; I am bothered about the ease with which everything falls into place. What Fairley has to say cannot possibly be the whole story.

Let us see whether this "Charlotte" affair cannot be caught from another angle. There is a profound passage in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* behind which lies a deeply significant experience. It reads: "A friend who lets it become too apparent that he is trying to mould you to his pattern, arouses annoyance; but a woman who fashions your life, while she seems to humour your whims, becomes an object adored, some heavenly being sent on an errand of joy." Ein Freund, der es zu deutlich merken laesst, dass er an euch zu bilden gedenkt, erregt kein Behagen; indessen eine Frau, die euch bildet, indem sie euch zu verwöhnen scheint, wie ein himmlisches, freudebringendes Wesen angebetet wird. As so often happens with Goethe, a significant experience comes alive in him with particular force after a long lapse of years. In the case of the "friend" we need not look far; Behrisch, Herder, Lavater, each fits the situation. But as regards the "woman" there is only one, and that is Charlotte. Lilli, to be sure, tried to fashion his life,

> Bin ich's noch, den du bei so viel Lichtern
> An dem Spieltisch haeltst?

but to no purpose, for in the end Goethe roves about in "Lilis Park," still an unlicked cub. And I can think of no other woman who could in any way lay claim to having posed for that picture. It must have been Charlotte! We know only too well how Goethe's "creative life swings into her orbit." How he exhausts himself in finding expressions of endearment and devotion. "Charlotte is the custodian, the protectress, the guide, the ministrant, she is the opiate, the anchor, the life-belt, and so on *ad infinitum*." But the vital question here is how did she spoil him? Certainly by humouring him in all his intellectual endeavours. We know little of this relation, because when the break came between them she demanded that Goethe return her letters, and she destroyed them. But Fairley does succeed in skilfully piecing together a pattern of what, no doubt, was the general tenor of their relation.

As for Charlotte, it does not follow that because Goethe took Spinoza to her she was in any sense a Spinozist, any more than it follows that because he tried

to make her study science along with all the others, telling her on 11 September 1780 that she must become a nature-lover—Sie müssen noch eine Erdfreundin werden—she had any real aptitude for science, or he any real success in discovering it in her. It can only have been in deference to him that she consented to play with a microscope or a telescope, as we are told she did. If we want to arrive at her instinctive reaction, we come nearer to it in a letter she wrote [not to Goethe] in May 1784, in which she says that everything that passes through Goethe's mind becomes interesting, and that in this way she, too, has become interested in horrid bones and dismal rocks—die gehässigen Knochen . . . und das öde Steinreich.

Fairley has helped us here by a circumlocution to the only possible understanding of a word coined by Goethe himself, *Anempfinderin,* which in the *Lehrjahre* he applies to Madame Melina. It was not by unconscious intent that he came by this word; it was cut to pattern, and the pattern is Charlotte. It would not have occurred to Goethe to give this word a masculine form.

"Lass mich auch einmal schauen," or "Wie du willst" are sweet and comforting words from the lips of an adored lady. And Goethe must have heard them, or something very much like them, over the long period of years It was her pattern to humour his whims. But where she came to express herself to someone other than Goethe, she hated the old bones and found the rocks dismal—these rocks that Goethe apostrophized, lending his ear to their silent language!

For ten long years Charlotte held Goethe at a proper distance, or rather Goethe kept that distance in reverence for a woman, who in past ages had been his sister or his Lady (in the medieval sense)—

> Ach, du warst in abgelebten Zeiten
> Meine Schwester oder meine Frau.

The word *Schwester* coupled with *Frau* will now and forever guard me against believing that Goethe could possibly have been guilty of incest.

But the reverse of the medallion bears its legend, too. For ten long years Goethe insisted on interesting Charlotte in things which interested her little, or not at all. For ten long years he persisted in spreading before her old bones and specimens of rocks. Both, as we have heard, affronted her prim sensibilities. And for ten long years she simulated an interest in these relics of antiquity. Her natural tastes repressed for such an unconscionable period! Little wonder that when the break came over Christiane, that her spirit showed itself small and vengeful. For ten long years she had committed the sin of sinning against herself.

To discuss the last part, "Italy and After," would now take us too far; this part must be read to be appreciated properly. The wisdom and calm which pervades the last chapters is a great comfort in these troublous times. The scientist in particular will find himself flattered. To move toward exact truth with radiant face, as Goethe did, is the highest achievement. Balance and harmony did not lay hold on Goethe until he could exclaim in deep reverence: What hath God wrought!

CONSERVATIVE CONSPIRACY[1]

KARL F. HELLEINER

An often heard criticism of military men implies that they think and act under the spell of the past. Generals, it is said, habitually plan their strategy as if they had to fight the last war over again. It would seem, though, that it is not only the much-maligned brass hats whose vision is distorted by memories of the past. Diplomatic advisers and political analysts, too, have rarely escaped the fascination of the historical pattern. When confronted with new and puzzling phenomena, foreign office officials and newspaper men first of all resort to their yellowing files in search of precedents and *clichés*.

The understanding of recent German history has long been obscured by that universal tendency to view and explain the unfamiliar in terms of past experience. Despite accumulating evidence to the contrary we have long continued to identify the Nazi régime with "reactionary," and its foes with "progressive" forces in German society, specious political equations which enabled us for a while to operate with such well-worn notions as "the Junkers," "Prussian militarism," "monopoly capitalism," etc. Hitler and his gang appeared as just another, although infinitely more vulgar, incarnation of Bismarck and the Prussian conservatives. In reality, the Nazi movement was no less "revolutionary" than Communism: if anything, it was more radical in its paganism, more contemptuous of "bourgeois" values, and probably more reckless in its appeal to mass instincts.

To be sure, the true character of fascism had became obscured temporarily by history itself. Fateful political developments in the twenties, thirties, and early forties had led to temporary alliances—unnatural alliances, we venture to suggest—of conservative forces with the powers of despotic nihilism. The short-sighted alignment of some Italian conservatives with early Fascists; the Harzburg Front of infamous memory in Germany; the precarious coalition of Spanish monarchists with the Falangist movement; Pétain's ill-starred experiment in conservative reconstruction under the shadow of the swastika: these and similar foolhardy or timorous attempts to cheat the devil at his own game seemed to betray, not so much the weakness or stupidity of conservative leadership, but an intrinsic kinship of right-wing movements and fascism.

We now know that all those who tried to tame the Great Beast were foredoomed: the stupid devil exists only in legends and fairy-tales. Conservatism in the totalitarian countries was swallowed up by its one-time ally. Yet for some time there was none to testify to its annihilation. The Evil One, though

[1] *The Von Hassell Diaries, 1938-1944: The Story of the Forces against Hitler inside Germany, as recorded by Ambassador* ULRICH VON HASSELL, *a Leader of the Movement.* With an Introduction by ALLEN WELSH DULLES. New York and Toronto: Doubleday. 1947. Pp. xiv, 400. ($5.75)

To the Bitter End. By HANS BERND GISEVIUS. Translated from the German by RICHARD and CLARA WINSTON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin [Toronto: Allen]. 1947. Pp. xvi, 632. ($4.50)

he would openly sneer at his dupes, still found it necessary occasionally to strut in the stolen costume of his conservative victims. The latter, even if they had been willing to cry *peccavi,* had long since lost the slightest opportunity to confess to their failure. Their political purblindness had brought upon them the penalty of enforced silence. A few of them, it is true, were resolute and fortunate enough to escape across the border, and tried to lend their voice to their mute friends at home. Yet men like Hermann Rauschning, while they enjoyed a measure of literary success, seem to have met, not unnaturally, with some distrust. At best they were taken for malcontents. As for the left-wing *émigrés,* they either sincerely believed in the identity, or at least the close affinity, of the conservative and fascist ideologies; or else they had small reason to abandon a fiction which had the twofold advantage of being politically convenient, and "correct" in the sense of Marxian orthodoxy.

Thus for a decade or so the outside world remained singularly ill informed regarding the secret survival and then the rally of traditional political ideas and values in the totalitarian countries, and more especially in Nazi Germany.

After the outbreak of war it became, of course, even more difficult to arrive at a true understanding of the forces of resistance in the enemy camp. Since very little was known about conditions inside Germany most judgments had to be based on inference. For instance, it could be assumed that the remnants of the left-wing opposition were completely demoralized as a result of the Moscow Pact. But what about the Right?

Influential leaders of the Christian Churches were known to be uncompromisingly hostile to the Nazi tyranny. As for the officers' corps, the abrupt dismissal in February, 1938, of Field Marshal von Blomberg as Minister of War and Colonel General von Fritsch as Commander in Chief of the Army, as well as the resignation, during the Sudeten crisis, of Colonel General Ludwig Beck from his post as Chief of the General Staff had shown the world that all was not well in Germany's armed forces either. The organized anti-Jewish riots of November, 1938, were also known to have caused general disgust and profound consternation among the German middle classes. Was it too much to expect that Hitler's alliance with bolshevism would finally rouse the conservative forces out of their somnolence? Political experts began to speculate on the possibility of a conservative *coup d'état* in Germany.

However, persistent rumours to the effect that "the generals" would soon put an end to the Nazi régime failed to materialize. The German war machine continued to function flawlessly. The victorious army leaders accepted marshal's batons from the hands of their gracious *Führer,* the ex-corporal. Developments seemed to bear out the opinions of those who had always maintained that Nazism, so far from being distasteful to the ruling classes, was nothing but their instrument in the penultimate phase of the class

struggle. If there existed a "secret Germany" at all, surely it would be represented not by princes of the Church, Junkers, generals, or high-ranking civil servants, but by proletarians, working in the cells of a Communist underground movement. (Hitler's friendship with Stalin, it must be recalled, had in the meantime gone to rack and ruin, and the illegal party organization of the German Communists, after a period of enforced inactivity, was sure to have received an urgent call to revolutionary action from its Moscow employers.)

In these circumstances the detonation of a bomb at Hitler's headquarters by Colonel Count von Stauffenberg on July 20, 1944, came as something of a surprise to a world which had long since discounted all hopes of a conservative uprising. Astonishment increased when in the weeks and months following the abortive *putsch* the public was given the names of the principals involved in the conspiracy. That Colonel General Beck, the former Chief of the General Staff, should have acted as the head of the revolt was, perhaps, not altogether surprising. He had long been suspected of strong oppositional views. But there were many more pillars of German society among the conspirators: three field marshals, von Witzleben, von Kluge, and Rommel of desert fame; a whole flock of generals and high-ranking officers, among them Admiral Canaris,[2] Chief of Military Intelligence, and his Chief of Staff, Major General Oster; numerous leading diplomats and civil servants, among them the Prussian Minister of Finance, Johannes Popitz, the Police President of Berlin, Count Helldorf, the former German Ambassador to Moscow, Count von der Schulenburg, the former German Ambassador to the Quirinal, Ulrich von Hassell, the author of the *Diaries* under review, and Hans Bernd Gisevius, German Vice-Consul at Zurich, the author of the second book to be discussed in these pages. The financier of the movement was a leading German industrialist, old Robert August Bosch, the head of the famous Robert Bosch Corporation. Among the victims of Hitler's terror after the discovery of the plot were members of some of Germany's most illustrious families: a Bismarck, a Moltke, a York, a Schwerin, and many other nobles.[3]

The world at large may not have understood, and some of the conspirators themselves may not have known, that their conservative revolt against despotism was more than an act of politics: it was a moral event, a *katharsis*. After years of silent submission to the forces of evil, the German aristrocracy of birth and rank made an attempt—alas! a weak and belated

[2]This enigmatic man, while undoubtedly an implacable foe of the Nazis, never, strictly speaking, joined the plot. But his help and protection were invaluable to the conspirators, and he paid with his life for his actions.

[3]To name some of the aristocratic and upper-middle-class members of the conspiracy is not to deny that socialists, too, played their part in the German resistance. But the leadership of the movement and its vital connections with the military and administrative apparatus of the state were furnished by men of a conservative bent. The Communist underground apparently never amounted to very much, and its leaders refused co-operation with other groups. (See Allen Welsh Dulles, *Germany's Underground* (New York, 1947), chap. VIII.)

one—to expiate its guilt, to vindicate its intrinsically liberal and Christian system of values, and to purge society of the poison that was gnawing into its vitals.

To speak of the conservative revolt as a symbol and token of spiritual recovery is not to disavow its meaner aspects. Gisevius, a leader of the movement, and one of the very few who survived its break-down, has given us a bitter account of all the vacillation and even abject cowardliness which preceded and accompanied the execution of the plan, and caused the action to collapse before it had got well under way. Gisevius's withering criticism of the generals' pusillanimity is confirmed by Ulrich von Hassell's exasperated entries in his diaries. Those unspeakable field marshals! They would receive the emissaries of Beck and Goerdeler, would listen attentively to their proposals, would nod approval, or shake their heads deprecatingly, and would in the end stammer out an excuse. On more than one such occasion, infuriated interlocutors decided to break off the conversation by challenging a weak-kneed general to call the Gestapo and have them arrested. (See, e.g., von Hassell's report of a meeting between General von Rabenau and Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, p. 172.) "Hopeless corporals!" von Hassell bursts out. "These generals would have the same government they wish to overthrow give them orders to do so."

From both von Hassell's diaries and Gisevius's historical account one gets the impression that ever since 1938 many of the leading military men had been doing little else but talk high treason.[4] Even those who refused to commit themselves must have been aware of the preparations for a *coup d'état*. They all realized that salvation lay in an early overthrow of the régime of terror and crime. But most of the generals lacked the courage—the political, not the individual courage—to assume responsibility for decisive action. A *coup d'état,* they argued, if undertaken prematurely, might lead to internecine civil war. It would have good chances of success only after a serious military set-back. Yet revolt in such a situation was tantamount to Germany's defeat. Should the generals stab their country in the back, perpetrate an act of national betrayal which they had so long accused the Left of having committed in 1918? From this vicious circle the generals never really escaped. It must be admitted, though, that Allied statesmen did precious little to help them resolve their conscientious troubles. The Casablanca formula of "unconditional surrender" was the worst blow to the German opposition.

Count Helldorf's denunciation of the generals, a scathing epilogue spoken in the evening of July 20, 1944, when all was over and the leaders of the movement knew that their plans had miscarried miserably, probably

[4]Apparently discontent was rife not only among high-ranking officers, but among younger men as well. As early as December, 1938, a friend of von Hassell's reported "he had heard young officers on active duty discussing quite openly their desire to make an attempt on Hitler's life." Another friend gave a similar report from a resort for officers of the Luftwaffe (p. 19).

did less than justice to the army leaders.[5] The civilian leaders cannot be absolved from blame either. They, too, often lacked the energy and the clarity of purpose without which an undertaking of that magnitude is doomed to failure.

Goerdeler, for instance, who was to have headed the new government, for all his zeal and courage, does not seem to have possessed the wisdom and the authority necessary for his position. The picture of Ulrich von Hassell, as it takes shape from the pages of his diaries, is that of a sincere Christian, a courageous patriot, an experienced diplomat, a highly educated gentleman—but hardly that of a great statesman. Yet von Hassell was scheduled to become Foreign Minister in Goerdeler's cabinet. Gisevius, too, was to have been given a government post. He might have done well in a difficult situation. "Goerdeler and others," von Hassell remarks in his diary, "praise him [Gisevius] to the skies. He is no doubt intelligent, informed, and active. But I don't quite make him out." (P. 59.) The self-portrait Gisevius has drawn in his book adds little to that characterization.[6]

The antecedents and the course of the conservative conspiracy against Hitler will no doubt be studied by future historians in the light of additional evidence. In the meantime the two books reviewed here, together with some other inside stories (e.g. by Fabian von Schlabrendorff and Emil Henk), and Allen Welsh Dulles's authoritative account of the German resistance movement, should provide the reader with sufficient material for a revision of a widely accepted conceptual framework in which the distinction between totalitarianism and conservatism has tended to become beclouded.

THE ELIZABETHAN SHAKESPEARE* — R. S. KNOX

These three recent books on Shakespeare, diverse in theme and often contradictory in opinion, are alike in their concern with the Elizabethan response to the plays. The most challenging of the three is Professor Lily Campbell's *Shakespeare's "Histories."* At the outset she explicitly states her point of view. She scoffs at those who deny that the plays need explanations beyond those "which a whole heart and a free mind abundantly supply."

[5]Helldorf's utterance as reported by Gisevius (p. 566) is too vulgar to be quoted verbatim in these pages. One has to make allowance for the wrath of the man, who felt that the generals had betrayed the cause.

[6]Since these lines were written the present reviewer has had the good fortune to talk to a person at one time well acquainted with Herr Gisevius and his family. This informant, while not questioning the man's sincerity, uttered some doubts as to the stability of his character. "A born conspirator" was the phrase he used to describe him.

**Shakespeare's "Histories": Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy.* By LILY B. CAMPBELL San Marino, California: The Huntington Library. 1947. Pp. xi, 346. ($6.75)

A History of Hamlet Criticism, 1601-1821. By PAUL S. CONKLIN. New York: King's Crown Press, at Columbia University. 1947. Pp. viii, 176, ($2.75)

As They Liked It: An Essay on Shakespeare and Morality. By ALFRED HARBAGE New York: Macmillan Company [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1947. Pp. xiii, 238. ($2.75)

She summarily rejects the notion that Shakespeare's drama is impersonal and unbiased and that it shuns the problems of contemporary politics. "I do not believe that a poet exists in a vacuum, or even that he exists solely in the minds and hearts of his interpreters. I do not believe that his reflection of his period is casual and fragmentary and accidental." Previously she had ably argued that in the Shakespearean tragedies there is a dominant ethical pattern of passion opposed to reason. Now she would show that in the history plays there is a dominant political pattern characteristic of the political philosophy of his age; they are mirrors of Elizabethan policy.

In Part I of her book Professor Campbell sets out to discover the principles and methods of Renaissance historiography and to show the practice of these in the non-dramatic histories. These chapters form in themselves a masterly survey; and she skilfully gathers the evidence which she later applies to the plays. By Shakespeare's time the aims, clearly stated and revealed in the previous histories, had become commonplaces. The stress was on the pertinent lessons offered by history, "which by examples past teacheth us to judge of things present," as North translates the phrase in Amyot's preface. That, she would claim, was also the burden of the Tudor Chronicles. Hall, covering the period from "the unquiet tyme of kyng Henry the fowerth" to "the triumphant reigne of king Henry the viii," wrote to serve political purposes and to teach political lessons, in particular the destruction that follows rebellion and civil dissension. Holinshed likewise forced home the timely meaning of events even with moral marginal comments. Raleigh, whose *History of the World* is the final document of Renaissance historiography, while denying that his purpose was to "taxe the vices of those that are yet living, in their persons that are long since dead," showed that the judgments of God are forever unchangeable and exemplified this by the threefold pattern of nemesis in English history by which an usurper's throne was lost by the third heir or in the third generation. The purpose of these and of all other Tudor historians was to establish and present the working of moral political laws. In the chapter on "Poetical Mirrors of History" Professor Campbell finds the same conception of the historian's function. Here her first exhibit is the *Mirror for Magistrates,* a political mirror for those in authority, where situations were chosen and even altered to reflect contemporary events. And there is Daniel's *Civil Wars,* its story interwoven with political lessons and the poem prefaced by its explicit argument: "to shewe the deformities of Civile Dissension, and the miserable events of Rebellions, Conspiracies, and bloudy Revengements, which followed (as in a circle) upon the breach of the due course of Succession, by the Usurpation of Hen 4; and thereby to make the blessings of Peace, and the happinesse of an established Government (in a direct Line) the better to appeare."

In Part II Professor Campbell chooses to deal with *King John* and the sequence from *Richard II* to *Henry V*. These plays, she considers, show more maturely Shakespeare's purpose and method in dramatizing history.

She has no difficulty in demonstrating Shakespeare's acceptance of one Renaissance principle, the political lesson of the evil of civil dissension and, if we link *Henry VI*, the fate of the usurping house in the third generation. It is when she expounds detailedly the significance of Shakespeare's selection and alteration of historical facts to fit current political problems that one begins to have doubts. This is especially so in her discussion of *King John*. She maintains that both in *The Troublesome Reign* and in Shakespeare's play the events of the Chronicle have been purposely distorted, not primarily for dramatic gains but to make them mirror the pattern of events in Elizabeth's reign: "the Papal interference, the imprisonment and death of Mary, the revolt of the nobles as if brought about by Mary's imprisonment and death, and the Spanish attempt at invasion." With Shakespeare, she argues, as not in the Chronicle, the events centre on Arthur; he is the necessary counterpart of Mary. To fit the likeness it is Arthur the prisoner which is presented, and the revolt of the nobles to avenge his wrongs parallels the insurrection of Mary's supporters. But surely there are obvious difficulties in accepting this relationship, except on a very general level. The sympathy of the audience is clearly drawn to Arthur, and, if his circumstances brought Mary to mind, then the unattractive John must have brought thoughts of Elizabeth. This Professor Campbell admits: "In the treatment of Arthur's death Shakespeare clearly mirrors Elizabeth's dilemma in regard to the Scottish queen." The dialogue in which John upbraids Hubert for carrying out his instructions "in essence did take place between Queen Elizabeth and Secretary Davison."

> O, when the last account 'twixt heaven and earth
> Is to be made, then shall this hand and seal
> Witness against us to damnation!

It is hard to credit the over-subtle scholarship which would make Shakespeare associate such a sentiment with the queen.

Professor Campbell is more cautious in her treatment of *Richard II* as a political mirror of the time. She sees in the play Shakespeare's balanced presentation of a problem then engaging the interest of the nation, the problem of the deposition of a king. "It might equally well have served as a warning to Elizabeth and to any who desired to usurp the throne." Accepting the view that the play was written not later than 1595, she rightly refuses to link it with the actions of Essex. Shakespeare, she thinks, had no single individual in mind, and, if he had, it was more likely to be James of Scotland. The play set forth the political views of the Tudors in regard to the rights and duties of a sovereign: "The way of the transgressing king was shown to be hard, but no happiness was promised to the one who tried to execute God's vengeance or to depose the deputy elected by the Lord." *Henry IV* continued the theme, showing an "unquiet kingdom." To find her contemporary reference for the theme of conspiracy here Professor Campbell

is forced back to the Northern Rebellion of 1569. She is not too confident about this but as usual can readily offer analogues: "It is thus apparent that the combined wrath of the Percies over Henry's failure to ransom Mortimer, the pretender, and over his demand that they hand over the Scotch prisoners may well be patterned by the demands of the northern lords that Mary, the pretender, be released, and that Mary, the Scotch prisoner, be left in the keeping of the Elizabethan Percy." Moreover there was a deal of rumour-mongering at the time of the Northern Rebellion, and does not Rumour play a conspicuous part in the prologue to the second part of *Henry IV?* In its tenuousness this argument is in keeping with the suggestion that Hal's "snatching" of the crown before his father's death may well have been "a symbolic representation of the unseemly activity of would-be heirs, and particularly James of Scotland." The final chapters on *Henry V* and *Richard III* are admirable historical commentaries, even if they offer fewer novelties, since these plays do not match the others "in showing the Elizabethans their own national problems being acted on the stage before them."

One may have doubts about some of Professor Campbell's particular contentions. One may even hold that Shakespeare was not especially interested in politics or impressed with the politicians whom he could so knowingly portray, that the changes from his sources, as in *King John,* reveal his concern with the personal rather than the political aspects of his stories. Nevertheless, in his histories, as in his other plays, he certainly offered his audience themes which came home to them and spoke in terms which they knew and accepted. This Professor Campbell manifestly proves; and her book affords an unmatched wealth of citations from pertinent documents to show that the main ideas in the history plays are, not surprisingly, in accord with Elizabethan views.

In *A History of Hamlet Criticism* Professor Conklin's main object, as the title implies, is to investigate the growth of Hamlet criticism from its beginnings to the Romantic ascendancy in the early nineteenth century. As an inevitable concomitant the story of this critical opinion becomes in part an account of certain dominant trends of thought and of the change in taste throughout the periods. Theoretically it is an objective history but, as Professor Conklin frankly admits, he has been forced to take sides. He is an avowed follower of Professor Stoll. He assumes that Stoll's conception of the play and the prince is that of the Elizabethans and, in the main, of the seventeenth century; and he traces the gradual growth of the "heresies" up to the "amazingly subtle" interpretation of Coleridge, whose "magic influence" he confesses he cannot easily shake off.

Throughout the history the distinction is made between the play as acted and the play as read; and of course it is the departure from the direct perspective which seems the chief cause of the later aberrations. In the seventeenth century and during the first half of the eighteenth there was in the theatre, it is claimed, a fairly uniform version. Based on a few early

references, "the law of probability would sanction the view that Shakespeare's revenge play had merely made more proverbial still a 'Hamlet, revenge' fixation which the popular mind already possessed." Hamlet was a malcontent avenger who still kept the markings of his Kydian ancestry, "masculine and primitive, often cruel and cynical, whose madness might take almost any incongruous form, including a type of insanity quite realistic." Another aspect is stressed in a poem commemorating the death in 1618 of Richard Burbage, the first great actor in the Hamlet role:

> Oft have I seene him leap into the Grave
> Suiting the person which he seem'd to have
> Of a sadd Lover with so true an Eye
> That theer I would have sworne he meant to dye.

Professor Conklin admits, however, that the early data are fragmentary and perhaps misleading. "We must not take too much for granted," he says. "It is significant that when the material of criticism becomes more plentiful, a Hamlet more congenial to us emerges. This would lead one to suspect that a more complete seventeenth-century picture, even in the early years, would produce a prince more like 'ours.' " "Ours," we presume, is still the strenuous avenger of Stoll.

With the eighteenth century came the great extension of the reading habit, but in the theatre the earlier tradition was with variations continued. Betterton, whose impressive acting of Hamlet is desribed by Colley Cibber, was the link between the centuries. Garrick, reflecting the mood of the period, was more delicate, meditative, and sentimental in the part, but "there was no sense of a prince who could not act or who was unmanly." The eighteenth-century Hamlet of the theatre "through all his evolutions was an active prince with a task on his hands, a task which in due time he carried out successfully."

In his review of English formal criticism to 1770 Professor Conklin picks out for special mention the *Remarks* of 1736, attributed to Hanmer. Despite his neo-classic prejudices, Hanmer is found to be "surprisingly sound." He is praised for his perception that there is no real motivation for Hamlet's assumed madness, and for his good sense in remarking that the delay in killing the king is not adequately explained but that "had Hamlet gone naturally to work, there would have been an end to our play." Hanmer, we are told, is brought close to the position taken by modern historical scholars by his recognition of the gap between Shakespeare's characters in their "great and moving circumstances" and the motivation to bring about the situation. About 1770 "the new Hamlet," the distorted Hamlet of the study, begins to displace the simpler, more straightforward figure. Richardson set the fatal fashion of psychologizing in terms of real life. Gentleman and Mackenzie stressed the prince's irresolute procrastination; and so the old tradition crumbles before the "insidious erosions" of romanticism. Even the theatre is momentarily betrayed by Kemble's "medi-

tative, ruminatory, sepulchral" portrayal. With Hazlitt, Lamb, and Coleridge the sway of the romantics is assured for nearly a hundred years—but their reign is well-nigh over. "Luckily for those who wish to keep some sense of reality, there exists today a sound historical criticism. But more important, the stage still produces gifted actors who carry on the tradition established by Burbage, Betterton, and Garrick. An heroic active prince still walks the boards—from Burbage to Evans the splendid continuity holds."

Professor Conklin has given a very interesting survey but an obviously biased assessment. He accepts too readily Stoll's notion of the Elizabethan Hamlet as the norm from which the romantics have departed. It is not too difficult to refute the idea that Shakespeare had perforce to abide by the Kydian tradition. Moreover our knowledge of the early stage versions is admittedly far too scanty to permit dogmatic conclusions about their conception of Hamlet; nor have we any assurance that the seventeenth-century producers adhered strictly to the original. Certainly they dealt loosely enough with other Shakespearean plays and roles. As to the assumed antithesis between the romantic and the historical critics, here is a view which deserves pondering:

> There is actually no such thing as historical or objective criticism—except possibly in matters of prosody and the like. With the first step into the realms of larger meanings, the subjective element enters in. . . . In general, the limits are broad enough to give hospitality to many interpretations, varying in detail in the degree that sane minds and moral natures vary in their exact configuration. It is as mistaken to conceive of an Elizabethan audience containing no Coleridges as to conceive of one composed wholly of Coleridges. The pathos of Shylock, the inertia of Hamlet, the genius of Falstaff, may seem more emphatic to later ages than to the Elizabethan; however, they are not created by these later ages but are in the plays to begin with. It is of the nature of art that it be variously received, and of great art that it mean many things to many men. All criticism that has had a respectful hearing resides safely within the limits of Shakespeare's meaning.

That last quotation is from Professor Harbage's *As They Liked It: An Essay on Shakespeare and Morality*. One must not be put off by the subtitle. Of the three books here reviewed this probably will prove the most enduring. It is a relief from the solemn efficiency of so many academic productions to come across anything so entertaining and well written and wise. It too seeks to present the Elizabethan Shakespeare, but the Elizabethan response is now found to have been fundamentally not unlike our own or that of any other period. Time and again Professor Harbage quietly but sensibly rebuts the excessive claims of the historical specialists. He refuses to allow any one school to claim Shakespeare for themselves. He answers those who would insist that the plays can be known only in the Renaissance frame of reference. Such scholarly studies "often reveal to the thoughtful the constancy of man's ideas about his universe, and the fact that

a great deal of common-sense may lurk behind quaint terminology. . . . The plays prove as nimble in slipping out of the Elizabethan frame as out of any other, and can be kept within it only by acts of minor violence committed by the investigator." He playfully tilts at the occasional pedantry of the students of Renaissance psychology: "Both philosopher and playwright saw sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholy men, just as we still see cheerful, dull, irritable, and gloomy men, or in the words of the vulgar 'good fellows, dopes, crabs,' and 'wet-blankets.' Hamlet appears to be a gloomy man who under other circumstances might be cheerful enough, and to say that he is 'a victim of melancholy adust as it is derived from the sanguine humour' is to transpose terms but not to elucidate the text." This kind of historical criticism, he feels, is in danger of becoming a movement toward art for the scholar's sake.

But these are merely some pertinent side issues from the main theme, that Shakespeare, concerned with the qualities and actions of men, deals basically with morality, but deals with it as an artist not as a moralist. His plays "are designed to exercise but not to alter our moral notions, to stimulate but not to disturb, to provide at once pleasurable excitement and pleasurable reassurance"; they accord with man's most deeply rooted moral convictions. That may seem a trite enough theme, most memorably expressed in Coleridge's words that Shakespeare keeps "at all times the high road of life," but with Professor Harbage's exposition it takes on fresh meaning and depth. The argument is made alive with shrewd and suggestive observations. We might instance his comments on Shakespeare's moral paradoxes which, as with Falstaff, delight us, if we are normal, by momentarily reducing our moral values to mere coruscations; on the oblique treatment of Hamlet's dilemma, consisting of offering us questions rather than statements; on Shakespeare "the Unreliable Spokesman," where we are reminded that the poet who is unmatched at framing moral maxims never shows them as doing the slightest good, or again, that the three speeches, usually quoted as expressing the poet's personal convictions on the necessity of order, are each delivered "by an unscrupulous politician meeting an immediate problem and advocating a political programme of somewhat debatable merit." There is an interesting discussion of justice in the plays, and towards the end a bright statistical analysis of the characters according to moral status, for which an unnecessary apology is made in that it calls for a suspension of the sense of humour. Such a tabulation may not in itself convince us of the dramatist's optimism, but the result conforms to our final feeling: "we leave the Shakespeare theatre more prone to think of man as a noble piece of work than as a fool on his way to dusty death"—a commonplace, perhaps, but one to which Professor Harbage has led us with an uncommon understanding and insight.

GODWIN'S *POLITICAL JUSTICE** NEWMAN I. WHITE

Few English writers of real influence and intellectual greatness have ever been so completely smeared with neglect and contempt as has William Godwin, the great philosopher in England of the tide of revolutionary thought which found its most active expression in the French Revolution. In his lifetime he was so forgotten during the counter-revolutionary reaction of the early nineteenth century that William Hazlitt could write of him in *The Spirit of the Age* as if he belonged already to another age, and the youthful Shelley, before becoming his most ardent disciple, could for some time suppose him already dead. Yet he was an important influence on the thought of both Coleridge and Shelley and upon many lesser writers and ardent young men of his time.

The "love of approbation and esteem" which Godwin remembered as one of his earliest guiding passions was singularly ill rewarded. His apparently harsh and inconsistent treatment of Shelley brought upon his personal behaviour a contempt shared by Shelley's authorized biographer, Professor Dowden. Mark Twain held him up to boisterous ridicule, and a clever but cruelly unfair article by A. Edward Newton in the *Atlantic Monthly* helped to confirm the tradition of William Godwin as a shabby and ridiculous philosopher.

Scholars who have written of him with less prejudice have too often adopted the superficial assumption that he was a wholly eclectic philosopher who merely synthesized the revolutionary philosophy of eighteenth-century France. Recently there has been a tendency to revalue Godwin more respectfully, as shown in the work of H. N. Brailsford, Middleton Murry, and George Woodcock. This tendency should be greatly strengthened by the present thorough and soundly based volumes of Professor Priestley.

The inaccessibility of Godwin's *Political Justice* has been one of the main reasons why the book has so long been misrepresented. The first service performed by Professor Priestley is to provide a text. Some scholars might have preferred a facsimile reproduction of the first rather than the third edition, on the ground that it was probably more influential, but Professor Priestley follows a sound general practice in representing Godwin by his latest revision. Moreover, the textual notes are so complete that a reader may easily reproduce for himself any one of Godwin's three editions. He has the complete information for tracing in detail every alteration in Godwin's text from 1793 through 1798, in case he wishes to supplement the excellent general discussion of these points provided by Professor Priestley.

Aside from the detailed annotation and collation, Professor Priestley's elucidation of *Political Justice* is limited to an introduction of 114 pages in

**Enquiry concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness*, by WILLIAM GODWIN; Photographic Facsimile of the Third Edition Corrected, Edited with Variant Readings of the First and Second Editions and with a Critical Introduction and Notes, by F. E. L. PRIESTLEY. 3 vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1946. Pp. lvi, 463, x, 554, viii, 346 pp. ($12.50)

Volume III, the purpose of which is "to present a systematic account of Godwin's thought, and to show its significance in relation to his sources and to the main currents of thought of his time." It is a thoroughly organized, hard-packed, and judicious discussion, made much more effective by an objective attitude which eschews all partisan tone. Though he makes it abundantly clear that Godwin has been scandalously misunderstood and misrepresented even by reputable historians of thought, this comes almost as a quiet by-product of developing thoroughly just what Godwin did say.

Professor Priestley labours under the same theoretical handicap as all scholars in that for manuscript basis he has had to rely almost entirely upon the letters and diary-extracts printed in 1876 in C. Kegan Paul's biography. No collection of Godwin's letters has been published, and his lengthy manuscript journal has been unavailable for over half a century. But the journal contains very little discussion, and so would have been of only slight value to the present work. Otherwise there is virtually no Godwinian literature which Professor Priestley has not laid under contribution. More important for his particular purpose, he has also studied thoroughly all of the English, French, and Italian writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who dealt with similar ideas and whose works could have been read by Godwin. There is no bibliography, but the foot-notes cite at least a hundred different works with which various details of Godwin's ideas are brought into comparison.

The plan of the Introduction is to study (1) the metaphysical and psychological basis on which Godwin's doctrines are founded, (2) Godwin's moral philosophy, (3) his political philosophy, and (4) his economic thought. Special sections are devoted to Godwin's relationship with the Dissenting tradition, to his revisions as showing the trend of his thought, and to the contemporary and later influence of *Political Justice*. The method in general is to elucidate the ideas consecutively and to compare each important idea with the related ideas of all other writers who could have influenced it, not omitting Godwin's own related ideas as expressed in other books.

Out of this study emerges a picture of Godwin's book that for most readers will be a drastically corrected one. Godwin did *not* believe in an easily acquired perfection to be achieved by overthrowing institutions; he believed only that a vastly improved and continually improving society could be achieved very gradually, and primarily by the improvement of men's minds. He did not write simply as in interpreter to England of eighteenth-century French radical philosophy; on the contrary he was influenced powerfully by the Puritan tradition in which he had grown up, and even by the English Platonic tradition. He chose and combined his ideas with genuine independence, occasional originality, and surprising consistence, considering the fundamental differences between the Platonic rationalist idealists and the French utilitarian sensationalists whose doctrines he combined. His

purpose was only incidentally a revolutionary one; basically his book is a strictly philosophic inquiry into the true basis of government. When he concludes that governmental machinery is on the whole more evil than good, and that the best government is the least government, the conclusion is a strictly philosophic one unaccompanied by revolutionary incitement. Even the most common and most valid objection to Godwin's theories—that reason is not the almost exclusive motive for conduct that he supposes—must take into account both his willingness to wait patiently a long time until reason grows stronger and the growing recognition of emotion, particularly the domestic affections, shown by his revisions. His later additions are not, as De Quincey asserted, virtually a renunciation of the first views; most of his many changes were efforts to improve clearness and proportion, and the not very fundamental changes in idea are the honest results of experience (e.g., his marriage) rather than of expedience.

Godwin distrusted direct appeal to the masses, and was well satisfied that his book cost too much ever to have a genuinely popular audience. He preferred (like Shelley in *Prometheus Unbound*) to teach the teachers. Professor Priestley's volumes are so soberly scholarly in tone (and also rather costly) that their effect on established opinion will also be slow, but they are undoubtedly a sound and valuable corrective which must necessarily modify opinion.

"Q"*

GILBERT NORWOOD

A man who counted among his friends both Thomas Hardy and Oscar Wilde, when the latter (believe it or not) was editor of *The Woman's World,* who wrote thirty volumes of fiction and superintended elementary education in Cornwall, who was a military officer paternal enough to bring his men home for tea after a route-march, who served with dignity as mayor of a seaport, and also composed at least one excellent limerick,

> Two students of psycho-analysis
> Corresponded on sexual fallacies
> Till confusion arose,
> And now nobody knows
> Which Algernon was or which Alice is,

who was commodore of a yacht club but was assaulted on a political platform as a pro-Boer, who knew how to cook a Spanish ham in chablis and completed the unfinished *St. Ives* so deftly that one cannot tell where Stevenson's part ends—such a man must be saluted as an exceptionally versatile professor. Most universitites would have been rent asunder by so vigorous a

**Arthur Quiller-Couch: A Biographical Study of Q.* By F. BRITTAIN. Cambridge: at the University Press [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1947. Pp. 174, illus. ($4.25)
The "Q" Tradition: An Inaugural Lecture. By BASIL WILLEY. Cambridge: at the University Press [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1946. Pp. 35. (45c.)

prodigy: it is a cogent testimony to the greatness of Cambridge that it loved, honoured, and hugely relished him.

All these qualities and exploits, with many more, you will find in this biography, a masterpiece of arrangement, good taste, unobtrusively skilful writing, and perfect depiction of those different surroundings wherein Q lived his eighty-one years.

But a humble reviewer who should attempt to mirror all the colours of that personality would meet the doom of the chameleon who invaded a tartan blanket and burst into pieces: he must dwell only on those activities which appeal most to his own puny soul. The novels, so thrilling and debonair, need little comment at this time of day. My own favourite, I rejoice to learn, was the author's also: *Sir John Constantine*. Many prefer *The Mayor of Troy* and other tales about his home, Fowey (pronounced Foy). The name perhaps caused queer confusion in the last war. Q wrote to a friend: "A German broadcast, the other day, announced that Fowey was in flames. Which it ain't, and hasn't been. Dr. Goebbels must have heard of Troy, for the first time, and got the story mixed up." Since half of his life fell in Victoria's reign, he yielded to the urge which drove the unlikeliest writers of that epoch—even George Eliot and Longfellow—to write a play. *The Mayor of Troy* was dramatized by its author; but, despite a new happy ending, the Haymarket Theatre, and Henry Ainley, it failed. "Ainley was palsied with nervousness . . . then a scene-shifter had a fit and died while setting Act 3." But there was always something wrong about Victorian plays: Tennyson's *Becket* (they tell me) killed Irving himself.

The other non-academic works are less notable, but should be better known. Here is a passage, from *The Warwickshire Avon,* of meditation before Shakespeare's tomb:

> . . . to divine, in the rugged epitaph so often quoted, the man's passionate dread lest his bones might be flung in time to the common charnel-house, the passionate longing to lie here always in this dusky corner, close to his friends and kin and the familiar voices that meant home—the talk of birds in the near elms, the chant of Holy Trinity choir, and, night and day, but a stone's-throw from his resting-place, the whisper of Avon running perpetually.

And his verse? In *Alma Mater,* by what seems almost a miracle, he gave perfect words to that strange second home-sickness, the misery of farewell to academic halls and cloisters.

> Know you the secret none can utter?
> Hers of the Book, the tripled Crown?
> Still on the spire the pigeons flutter;
> Still by the gateway haunts the gown;
> Still on the street, from corbel and gutter,
> Faces of stone look down. . . .
>
> Know you the secret none discover?
> Tell it—when *you* go down.

This secret which the poet defies any man to tell was spoken later with intimate truth and flawless artistry in the most beautiful of English novels, Mr. Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street*.

The year 1912, when he was forty-nine, decisively altered the tenor of his life. By this time his reputation was already great and broadly based. Famous as a novelist, admired as an essayist and a poet, he produced also the celebrated *Oxford Book of English Verse*. His work on school education in Cornwall was a less advertised but at least equal public service. Unfailing ardour and strong opinions had made him a distinguished politician: Dr. Brittain delightfully calls Q's life-long fidelity to Liberalism an example of his sacrificing personal preferences to deep-seated convictions. Whether for this merit alone or for them all, he was knighted in 1910. Two years later the Crown appointed him King Edward VII Professor of English Literature at Cambridge.

Before discussing the career thus inaugurated, let me answer two questions that will instantly occur to some readers of this quarterly: "What salary? how many teaching-hours a week?" £800 a year; one public lecture, one or two classes—informal, with cigarettes and coffee. As for these latter revels, one must remember that many Englishmen alternate formality and informality with a readiness disconcerting to the rest of mankind. For instance, Q invariably delivered his weekly public lecture "in correct morning-dress." Though his hearers were mostly women, he always addressed them as "Gentlemen," because Newnham and Girton were not legally parts of the University, spinsterish as it was.

The founder, Sir Harold Harmsworth (afterwards Lord Rothermere), had laid it down not only that the professor's lectures should deal with English Literature "from the Age of Chaucer onwards," but, moreover, that they should do so on "literary and critical rather than on philological and linguistic lines." Sir Harold must have used that dire school edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which ruined the play for me as a boy. Memory calls up an immense note on those "russet-pated choughs" whereof Puck so airily talks and thus flings wide the gate to a ghoulish procession of the O.H.G., Gothic, and Lithuanian noises akin to "chough." Be that as it may, Sir Harold's idea was also Q's, who made full use of this opportunity. Little need be said here of the organization work that he carried through or of his struggles in founding, developing, and championing the English Tripos. For however admirable a scheme of study (or aught else that affects the soul) may be, it has no value unless those who work it have vivid personality, perspective and humour, a share of the spirit that giveth life. Those virtues and others, especially an unsurpassed flair for what is interesting and an equal power to make it interest others, Q possessed in abundance. Look at this:

Gentlemen, I would I could persuade you to remember that you are English, and to go always for the thing, casting out of your vocabulary all such words as

"tendencies," "influences," "revivals," "revolt." "Tendencies" did not write *The Canterbury Tales;* Geoffrey Chaucer wrote them. "Influences" did not make *The Faerie Queene;* Edmund Spenser made it.

His lecture on jargon, so bracing and so famous, may seem to have small connection with English literature, but he ever insisted that his hearers should practise writing themselves. It was sorely needed and has had many successors, though nothing even in Fowler or Sir A. P. Herbert rivals the agonizing fun of Q's jugglery with the word "case." His published addresses, above all *The Art of Writing* and *The Art of Reading*, are superb as manuals and perfect bedside books into the bargain. He could not have been dull, even had he tried. One reason for that was perfect sincerity. No book's unpopularity or eclipse blinded him to its virtues. No name was great enough to silence his censure, as his correspondence shows. Of *Love's Labour's Lost* he wrote: "Such arrant rot interspersed with passages so lovely!" *Timon* he thought "no play at all." *Troilus and Cressida* is described as "a bad play of which I maintain hardily that not even a Shakespeare can play the fool *understandingly* with classical matter in default of proper baptism." Concerning a later idol he wrote in 1943: "There are signs . . . that sensible people are sickening of the T. S. Eliot game(Has he ever written three consecutive lines of poetry in his life?) of perpetually 'debunking' beauty and sneering at it." His was that benign and zestful amateurishness which marks the truly great professor.

Professor Willey succeeded Quiller-Couch, who died in 1944. His inaugural lecture is about "the Q tradition" but does not belong to it, being, despite its skill and urbanity, little more than the highest common factor of all inaugural lectures. Even so, he is to be thanked for quoting Sir Max Beerbohm's perfect answer to a hackneyed stupidity: "We do not say to a violinist, 'Just think clearly what you want to express and then go ahead. Never mind how you handle your bow.'" Sidney's words, "look in thy heart and write," torn from their context have done enough damage: let us either take them aright or forget them.

CHRISTIAN SYMBOL AND CONVENTION* MALCOLM MACKENZIE ROSS

What are we to say now of the stylized conventions of the ages of faith, of those fixed and formal symbols of Justice and Mercy, Hope and Despair, Humility and Pride, and all the other allegorical daughters of God, the flesh, and the devil by means of which the artist sought for so long both to perceive and to express the nature of things?

At a moment like ours when insistence on the simple, direct, sensuous image has weakened, when the artist gropes for the relevant myth rather

**The Virtues Reconciled: An Iconographic Study.* The Alexander Lectures, 1945-6. By SAMUEL C. CHEW. Toronto: University of Toronto Press—Saunders. 1947. Pp. xii, 163, illus. ($2.75)

than for the intelligible object, we are not quite so ready as we once were to ignore or to disparage the medieval vision. We are careful not to say any more that Dante was great in spite of his faith, in spite of the sensibility and technique proper to the vision he had by his faith. We are learning not to praise Chaucer by calling him "modern." There has been nothing "modern" since 1939—a very long while ago indeed, just after the Renaissance ended and Descartes died violently in our heads.

And now the doctrine of progress is gone; the cult of the hard fact is gone; chronology has little more to do with history; seeing is no longer believing. Truth is to be discovered, if at all, not in social statistics or in the laboratory experiment but in the scrutiny of the nightmare. Free as we seem to be at last of nature and time and reason, is it surprising that we suspect all traditional estimates and therefore contrive unthinkable resurrections? Is it surprising that in the main we conjure up not the fleshed and fashioned children of history but rather the ooze and stuff of pre-history, dim and mindless symbols that can be made to match the nightmare? Or that we prefer the private myth stained with wish-fantasy to the public myth ordered by thought?

In such a frame of mind we cannot at any rate hold a positive "progressive" kind of Renaissance prejudice against medievalism. It is respectable today to be a "medievalist," to "specialize in the Middle Ages," to found academies which contain the *Summa,* the cathedral, the fabliau, precisely as the geologist's box contains valuable Precambrian specimens. We hunt the museum piece. And if we philosophize our task we may even admit that we hunt, disinterestedly, exhausted symbols, the fossils of a process of symbolization no longer vital whereby man once tried to pin his own shadow to the sky. We make so bold at times as to compare the fossil pieces with the evolved structures of living styles in poetry and painting, just as we might compare the wings of the pterodactyl and the sparrow. But let no one dare accuse us of believing that the pterodactyl lives!

The great generative ideas of Christianity, it would seem, did their proper work, begat a St. Thomas Aquinas and a Dante, and died in due time, as all the generative ideas have done, suffocated within a shell of obsolescent symbol. The final hardening of a symbolic system, presumably, betrays the old age and approaching death of the generative ideas. But—and here we justify our interest in the dead past—*that which is symbolized is never so important as the fact that we do indeed symbolize,* as the fact that we have always shown ourselves to be symbolizing animals. Thus metaphysics is at last replaced by psychology, and scholarship fills the absence of belief.

Consequently, for the Christian artist of our time, aware as he must be both of the seductive immediacy of the pre-historic or the anti-historic myth and of the abstract remoteness of the medieval myth, the problem of tradition becomes highly complex. At first glance, the Christian artist would seem

to be a traditionalist without a tradition. Note, for example, T. S. Eliot's strenuous search for a continuity in poetry which is at once Christian and lively. Certainly, the Christian artist cannot, in company with so many of his contemporaries, abandon tradition, the very concept of tradition, as he cannot admit the death of those ideas which once generated the Christian tradition in art—the tradition that is dead. Then where does he belong? Where are his roots? Is he not really a kind of displaced ghost trying on flesh that is not his?

Professor Chew's brief study of the Four Daughters of God (Truth, Justice, Mercy, Peace) is pertinent to this whole problem. The book does much to restore the value of the historical (and chronological) understanding of symbol. It helps, by implication, to destroy the illusion that the death of a symbolic system necessarily involves the death of its generative ideas. And Professor Chew's evidence points out the living lines which the Christian tradition was actually to follow and, indeed, may still follow.

My sole quarrel with Professor Chew is that the claim he makes for the contemporary relevance of his work is far too modest. It is easy to agree with him that "the great commonplaces" he deals with are "still applicable to the human situation" and "have a message for us." But the true significance of Professor Chew's "venerable personifications" is to be found in the context that shifts about them. After this book, the Christian artist in search of his proper tradition need not be tempted to disappear behind the sacred but closed structure of the medieval symbolic universe. And if his yearning for medievalism has been at bottom a yearning for the simplified and motionless, let him turn from Dante and St. Thomas to the new literature of the Soviets in which, by an occult convulsion of the dialectic, Type is yanked forever into Stereotype.

It is true, I am sure, that the Christian can enter alive, as the "disinterested" historian cannot, the symbolic universe of the Middle Ages. For the Christian, quite beyond the practice of scholarly reconstruction (a practice which he none the less must not seek to avoid), there is the fact of his belief to raise the ticketed fossils from the dead and to part their lips. The Christian can confound chronology as airily as any Bergsonian. Yet he must respect it, too. He must not seek to puncture time with the medieval type, whether it be the type of the morality play, the guild system, or the Holy Roman Empire. Rather he must seek to dissociate the symbol from that which was symbolized, seek to lighten the living idea for a far and further swoop upon time.

It is precisely this process of the dissociation of symbol from idea which one observes in the literature examined by Professor Chew. *The Virtues Reconciled,* a first essay in what is to be an exhaustive treatment of the relationship between verbal and visual imagery in the Tudor and Stuart periods, gives an exciting account of the impact made by certain common allegorical artifices, medieval in origin, upon the temper of Renaissance art.

Professor Chew reminds us that the Elizabethan was bred to allegory by picture. The walls of churches and shops and taverns were still abounding with representations of the Works of Mercy, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Dance of Death. The great halls were still hung with emblematic tapestries. Then there were the emblem books themselves. But Professor Chew wisely does not attempt a proof of the direct influence of painting on poetry. He contents himself with illustrating habits of thought and feeling common to painter and poet alike, habits derived from the long ages of the Christian tradition. And although Professor Chew does not force the conclusion himself, it seems to me to be inescapable to conclude that the poetry of the High Renaissance was seldom able to be merely ornamental and artificial. The Elizabethan may have thought of poetry as "speaking picture," but Elizabethan pictures spoke sense. Professor Chew's handling of poetic image in relation to picture helps to substantiate Miss Rosemund Tuve's recent thesis that Elizabethan pictorial poetry characteristically reaches after essential significance through the expression of particulars.

In striking examples from *Richard II, I Henry IV,* and *The Merchant of Venice,* Professor Chew is also able to show how Shakespeare deepened the surface of dialogue and action by revealing beneath the movement of the specific, rich levels of symbolic signification. Shylock, for instance, appears in the trial scene not with scales and sword (the familiar medieval emblems of Justice) but with scales and knife. The suggestiveness is unmistakable of this substitution of the knife, with its associations of "cruelty and treacherous violence," for the sword with its associations of "gallantry, nobility, and stern righteousness." Surely, as Professor Chew contends, "to the Elizabethan accustomed to think in terms of symbols, the figure of Shylock may well have appeared to be a travesty of Justice." And one remembers, too, the Elizabethan dumb show, the allegory in pantomine, used to uncover the intention beneath the event.

In short, the poetry of the High Renaissance is at least half medieval—and not in any merely mechanical or quantitative sense. In the new cultural pattern which develops one can observe a startling double motion. The Christian idea advances towards the specific, the concrete, first assuring it of meaning by a kind of juxtaposition and balance, then entering it and possessing it as a dwelling is possessed. We must go beyond Professor Chew's study to watch the fulfilment of this process in the metaphysical poets. Herbert, for example, converts the courtly love lyric into a hymn. But he does so by a transubstantiation which leaves to the species both contour and texture. One even senses that the tragi-comedy of the early seventeenth century reflects not so much the peace-making foreign policy of James I—as Professor Chew suggests—as the Christian paradox of death and resurrection expressed almost wholly at last through the fleshly images and the glancing action of particularity.

The other motion which one observes is away from the concrete and

the specific. Curiously enough, it is a motion away from the Christian idea and towards the secular idea. Professor Chew provides many fascinating examples of this phenomenon. It is enough to indicate here that in the main the abstract personified symbol is drawn steadily towards the political and social theme. (The work of Bunyan appears as the great exception.) The Four Daughters of God are put to defending the rival ecclesiastical and political claims of the Catholic, Anglican, and Puritan parties. In illustrating topical debates, in magnifying the Virgin Queen, in hallowing the practices of the English merchant, the medieval type of Christian symbol was gradually secularized and schooled for surprising new tasks. Soon after Milton abandoned his "Adam Unparadised" in favour of the direct, non-allegorical treatment of God and man in *Paradise Lost,* the "venerable personification" is seen to mince rejuvenated— but unshriven—across the Restoration stage.

Clearly, then, the allegorical symbol does not enshroud the generative ideas of Christianity. It enshrouds a secular rationalism culminating in the witty abstraction of Alexander Pope—or perhaps in Mrs. Malaprop.

In fairness to Professor Chew, I must make it clear that this sketch of the direction taken on the one hand by the Christian idea and on the other by the medieval type of symbol, constitutes my own deduction from the evidence which he presents. Professor Chew has been more cautious and has allowed his documents to speak for themselves. But if I have heard their talk aright, the book has the kind of relevance which I have claimed for it. To the contemporary Christian artist who nervously seeks fit flesh in the strange shops of our day, Professor Chew's study should be heartening. For here the Christian tradition appears, and so it should appear, as the charitable captor of traditions, eternally seizing and sanctifying the quick profane, bequeathing its tested garments to the beggars of time. In Mauriac's quest for the Creator in the creature, in Graham Greene's astonishing employment of his detective "thriller" techniques, in Eliot's baptism of the Golden Bough and the bifocal sense of history, in Auden's particularization of allegory and in his patristic rendering of the new psychology, in all of these, the Christian tradition, which is no tradition and all traditions, continues to exert its generative force.

THE GROWTH OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE*

F. S. Hogg

**The Growth of Physical Science.* By Sir James Jeans, O.M. Cambridge: at the University Press [Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada]. 1947. Pp. x, 364. ($3.50)

Through the world-wide popularity attained by such books as *The Universe Around Us, The Mysterious Universe,* and *Physics and Philosophy,* the late Sir James Jeans awakened a remarkable public interest in astronomy and other physical sciences. That he was a master at presenting abstruse concepts in a very lucid and almost exciting manner is attested by the en-

joyment his books gave to a very large circle of readers. That he was himself one of the great productive scholars in the field of mathematical physics may not be as well known to his wider audience. Yet the background of a whole generation of modern physicists was shaped to a considerable extent by such almost classical mathematical treatises as Jeans's *Dynamical Theory of Gases, The Mathematical Theory of Electricity and Magnetism,* and *Astronomy and Cosmogony.* With his record as a very productive scholar in several difficult fields of the mathematical sciences, and as a writer of scientific best-sellers, Sir James Jeans was uniquely fitted to write such a volume as *The Growth of Physical Science.* The result is a most remarkable and valuable book, whether for careful or more casual reading.

Any attempt to summarize the development of mathematics, astronomy, physics, and chemistry from the most remote beginnings down to relativity, the quantum theory, and the expanding universe, must be based on a rather arbitrary and personal selection of ideas, events, and men. In the fairly large section devoted to astronomy, Jeans has struck a reasonable balance between observation and theory. The general historical development is divided into eight main eras, each of which is further sub-divided into several broad fields of science. Thus the work of some scientists is referred to under several discussions, though in general the important part of each scientist's work is treated as a unit. For example, though the ideas of Galileo and Newton appear in relation to many fields, at various places throughout the book, the life and work of Copernicus is considered in a single essay—and very vividly. As the era of modern physics and astronomy is reached, the pace of the book becomes more hurried. Increasing attention is paid to a recital of a large number of important ideas and experiments, and less to the relation of the physical sciences to modern thought and existence. Yet surely the early interaction of religion and science is not more important than the current influence of science on our general outlook on life.

Mathematicians and astronomers who are familiar with the differences in opinion between Jeans and Eddington on many problems of astrophysics will be interested in the importance Jeans ultimately assigned to Eddington's work on stellar interiors and galactic dynamics. Even more surprising is the last page, which is devoted to a summary of Eddington's final theory on numerical relationships in the universe. Though he says that "few if any of Eddington's colleagues accepted his views in their entirety; indeed few if any claimed to understand them," Jeans champions these views as not unreasonable. Surely this was a gracious conclusion to decades of rivalry.

The book is illustrated by thirteen plates and thirty-eight simple figures in the text. The plates are mostly from well-known sources, such as Kepler's planetary orbits, Galileo's pendulum clock, Guericke's Magdeburg hemispheres, and an early X-ray photograph. Most of the line-cuts illustrate simple problems in geometry or physics. The inclusion of a few descriptive

diagrams in the long section on the era of modern physics would have shortened tedious descriptions and aided general comprehension.

The book contains a few, mostly very minor, errors. Cassini (p. 245) is credited with Piazzi's discovery of the first asteroid, Ceres, in 1801, though elsewhere Cassini's birth and death are correctly given as 1625 and 1712; Lockyer's observation of the spectrum of helium should have been dated 1868 (p. 249); and the triangles drawn in Figure 5 are not equilateral as described.

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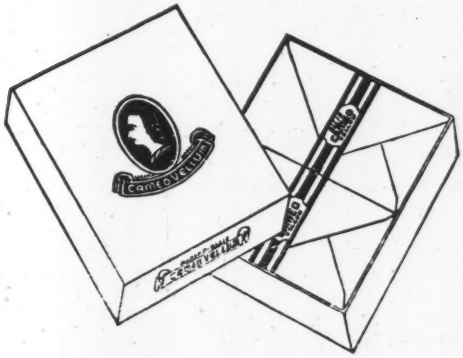

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